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MUSIC: CRACKER • 34 / FILM: COWARDS BEND THE KNEE • 43 / ARTS: TRADING HEARTS • 50

EDMONTON'S 100% INDEPENDENT NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

FEB 12 2004

VUEWEEKLY

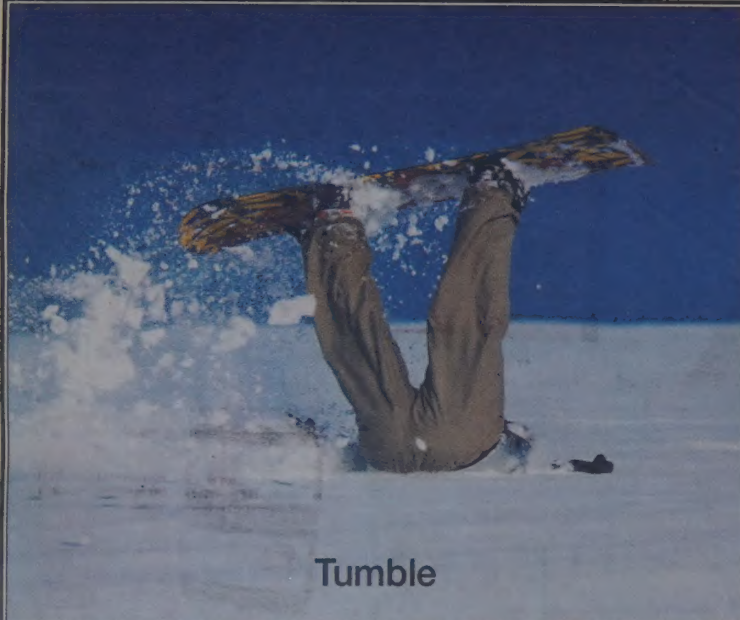
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BY TOM ROSCHKOV • 12

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ON THE COVER

For many First Nations tribes, the grizzly bear was a symbol of motherhood. For many urbanites, the grizzly is a symbol of everything that's majestic and wild about our forests. And for Tom Roschkov, the grizzly—especially the vanishing Swan Hills grizzly—is a symbol of Alberta's callous squandering of its own glorious natural heritage • 12



MUSIC

Cracker gives fans more than just crumbs off the table • 34



FILM

Hockey, revenge and sexual perversion: *Cowards Bend the Knee* • 43



ARTS

Trading Hearts shouts "Voyeur!" in a crowded theatre • 50



yourVUE

Ratner's star

Thanks for printing the letters from my friends, family and collaborators regarding Darren Zenko's review of *Moving Malcolm*, my directorial debut [Moving violation, Your Vue, January 29-February 4]. It is unfortunate, however, that you chose to print only quotes from poor reviews in an attempt to support Zenko's harsh comments. Is this your idea of thorough and balanced journalism? You conveniently ignored the glowing reviews from some of the nations' top critics readily available on our website at www.movingmalcolm.com, and neglected to mention that the film won a Special Jury Mention for "Best First Feature" at its premiere at the 2003 Montreal World Film Festival. You also chose not to mention that the film has to date played at over a dozen fes-

tivals from Kolkata, India to Fredericton, New Brunswick to Palm Springs, California. Additionally, Rebecca Harker recently won the Best Supporting Actress award from the Vancouver Film Critics' Circle for her portrayal of what Zenko called a "poorly formed special needs character." [Technically, Patricia Clarkson won the VFCC's Best Supporting Actress award for Pieces of April; Harker was named Best Canadian Supporting Actress. —Ed.]

My "angry" phone calls to your publisher Ron Garth were in fact very polite and calm. And while I didn't write a letter to the editor myself, I hardly had to "coach" my friends to write their letters in response to what was a clearly over-the-top, deliberately personal attack. I did leave my phone number with Mr. Garth, however, and asked for Zenko to call me personally to see if he could divulge his sources

for his "inside information" and also to see if he had the gall to insult me directly, instead of hiding behind his byline. He didn't call.

My own web research reveals that Zenko has a book coming out called *Ghost Stories of Pets and Animals*. Good luck, Zenko. I'm sure it's destined to become a cherished contribution to Canadian literature. —BENJAMIN RATNER, DIRECTOR, MOVING MALCOLM

Vue Weekly welcomes reader response, both positive and negative. Send your opinion by mail (Vue Weekly, 10303-108 Street, Edmonton, AB, T5J 1L7), by fax ((780) 426-2889) or by e-mail (letters@vue.ab.ca).

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media
jungle

By AMY FUNG

Triumph of the puck

Anytime a song by Blue Öyster Cult or Queen opens a movie trailer, I brace myself; I know that in the next 60 seconds something terribly wrong will befall me. This case was no different: rapidly-edited images, fists punching through the air and the chorus of "We Will Rock You" cranked up to jet-plane decibel levels. However, the onslaught of vintage arena-rock soon gives away to roar of the audience within-the-film as the camera sweeps over an ecstatic crowd of flag-wavers. That then gives way to an inspiring-looking man giving an inspiring, impassioned speech to a crowd of uniformed onlookers, telling them to "Do it for your country." The trailer ends with the American flag and the word *Miracle* pasted proudly over it.

What I saw, of course, was the extended theatrical trailer for the new Disney movie about Team USA's 1980 underdog triumph at Lake Placid. The men's hockey team beat out the indestructible Soviets for Olympic gold in what was, according to ESPN, the most-watched sports event in television history. The movie, starring Kurt Russell as helmet-haired coach Herb Brooks, may be a blast from the past for hockey fans, but the only memory that came to my mind was the scene of Alex strapped down in the theater in *A Clockwork Orange*.

In that film, the main character was forced to watch hours of violence accompanied by a dose of nausea-inducing serum and the sweet sounds of Ludwig Van. Afterwards, anytime he experience anything violent or heard Beethoven, Alex once again felt nauseous to the core of his being.

The trailer for *Miracle* has a strikingly similar effect on me; now every time I hear the opening to "We Will Rock You" or see Kurt Russell, I have the urge to vomit. This is not because I feel a surge of violence when I think of how Americans have appropriated hockey as their sport, but because I've realized *Miracle* is no harmless Mighty Duck. Every time the trailer comes on, a sense of fear washes over me. American jingoism seems everywhere these days, but where's the line between glorified patriotism and just plain fascism?

The trailer for *Miracle* bares a striking resemblance to Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*—the film known as both a landmark cinematic achievement and the propaganda film that Hitler commissioned. *Miracle* will be known for neither of those two things. In fact, it will most likely be forgotten and broadcast on ABC in two years. But the common bond here is not fascist content, but a fascist aesthetic.

Susan Sontag's essay "Fascinating Fascism" makes the argument that Riefenstahl's body of work is not totalizing because of her associations with the Nazis, but because of its all-encompassing aesthetic domination. Riefenstahl invented the crane shot and beautifully captures her subjects in powerful poses. Her later work on the Nuba tribes were striking photographs of athletically superior bodies, but this is precisely Sontag's argument: Riefenstahl's beautification of her subject dehumanizes them as the ideal object.

Bill Beard, a professor of film and media studies at the University of Alberta, recently gave a lecture on fascism as a part of the university's "Doing It in the Dark" series of film talks. Although Beard would agree that the trailer's rhetoric is very similar to *Triumph of the Will*, he points out that most of our entertainment these days would fall under this category. "On the other hand," he says, "it is also similar to what goes on in an awful lot of propaganda and also to the kind of cheap exaltation that lots and lots of Hollywood movies try to achieve on a routine basis. The difference here is that it is tied to an overtly patriotic aim. The closest similarity would then be to other patriotic Hollywood movies, all of



which share this aesthetic. Interesting to note that Sontag identifies Disney as another purveyor of this kind of idealist aesthetics."

Sontag cites *Fantasia* and also Kubrick's *2001*, but these films are arguably masterpieces along with *Triumph*. Riefenstahl spent the rest of her long career haunted by her association with the Nazis, but she was nevertheless a great artist. Her work can be appreciated for form, not content. *Miracle*, on the other hand, is supposed to be a slice of uplifting entertainment in the mould of such recent Disney hits as *The Rookie* and *Remember the Titans*. Beard carefully notes that while most modern films and editing techniques are fascist in the sense that they attempt to remove of the viewer's ability to think rationally about what is being shown to them and thereby provoke an emotional and visceral response. But he believes labeling them as fascist is questionable.

"In my view," he says, "to invoke the label 'fascist,' you need to look at the implicit aims of the work or how the work is actually used. If the aims are fascist, then the work is fascist. Or if

it is used to produce fascist effects, then it is fascist. If they are populist or anti-political romantic idealist without a specific political dimension, you may be able to say that they are easily co-opted for fascist ends, but I wouldn't want to call them inherently fascist."

Miracle is not a fascist film, but it does indulge unwittingly in fascist aesthetics. Point for point, it matches Sontag's description: "[Fascist aesthetics] flow from (and justify) a preoccupation with situations of control, submissive behavior, extravagant effort and the endurance of pain; they endorse two seemingly opposite states, egomania and servitude."

Beard's lecture centred on fascist aesthetics, but in the end was more about the loss of aesthetics as an available critical category in academia. "In contrast to the university environment," he concluded, "aesthetics are certainly front and centre in almost every dimension of our actual society today." As for *Miracle*, a film clinging to the hope that a modern audience can imagine the U.S. as the down-and-out underdogs, a closer study of its aesthetics seems the only appropriate route. ☐

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SNACKS

Mmmm... international trade disputes

OTTAWA—As bad as the Canadian-American trade dispute over softwood lumber has become, you have to admit that it really hasn't affected the lives of us, the greater non-lumberjack population, in any major way. But our blissful ignorance regarding the world of tariff law and trade relations may soon be coming to an end, with Canada and the United States getting embroiled in a dispute over something most of us actually come in contact with, much to the detriment of our collectively expanding love handles: snack foods.

That's right—apparently in keeping with some lesser-known trade legislation that stipulates Canada and the U.S. must be fighting about some damned thing at all times, the latest round of trade disputes revolves around, of all things, breaded cheese sticks. Washington has issued a formal statement of protest to the Canadian government over a 28-month-old decision to effectively close Canada's borders to American cheese stick imports, according to a recent article in the *Globe and Mail* claiming that the Canadian tariff has stalled a \$10-million-a-year import industry. Canada, however, ever vigilant in protecting the interests of Canadian cheese stick farmers everywhere, is refusing to budge, defending the move as retaliation to a similar U.S. tariff wall against Canadian cheese sticks.

According to International Trade spokesman Pierre Bouchard, Ottawa has simply become fed up with U.S. cheese stick diplomacy. The tariff was implemented by former trade minister Pierre Pettigrew, who, as Bouchard explained to the *Globe*, felt he "needed to put his foot down to demonstrate 'Whoa, that's enough—we're not going to tolerate any more.'" Under Pettigrew's trade policy, any American cheese sticks that try to enter Canada will be slapped with an excessively high tariff meant to discourage import. (No mention is made if the cheese sticks will be eaten by trade officials along with confiscated ranch dip.)

Regardless, the cheese stick embargo has gotten serious enough that the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) has tried to sue for peace in the matter and threatened to obtain intervention from the White House if necessary. A U.S. government report on trade barriers made last year says that "USTR... is prepared to request that the president issue a proclamation to return duty- and quota-free treatment to Canadian cheese sticks," but that the last word they had heard from Ottawa was that "Canada had no intention of reducing its duties or entering into negotiations with the United States."

If Canada and the U.S. cannot reach common ground on the cheese stick battlefield, there's a chance the dispute will be brought to the World



Trade Organization for interpretation—a move that will likely result in the most delicious WTO meeting ever convened. —CHRIS BOUTET

POLITICS

Smoking not allowed in the lobby

TORONTO—As far as anti-smoking sentiment goes, few provincial governments are more staunchly opposed to tobacco than Dalton McGuinty's Liberals in Ontario. At least that was the general consensus until someone noticed an advertisement in the *Toronto Star* this Monday that revealed the Ontario government was looking to hire a specialist to market and promote tobacco use.

Naturally, the very existence of the \$75,000 lobbyist position in the province's agricultural ministry caused more than a few people to call the Ontario Libs hypocrites. After all, they came into power on a platform that promised to outlaw smoking in all public places within three years. When the posting was brought to McGuinty's attention on Tuesday, he claimed to be unaware of the situation, stating that the job must be a holdover from Ontario's previous government.

That the position existed in years past hardly comes as a surprise. Tobacco farming has long been a lucrative industry in Ontario, netting the province more than \$1.26 billion a year—which almost offsets the \$1.3 billion that the Ontario Medical Association estimates the province spends to treat tobacco-linked diseases every year. Because of the enormous revenue generated by tobacco crops, the Ontario opposition is finding it hard to believe that McGuinty was completely unaware of the lobbyist position. According to the *London Free Press*, NDP MPP Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth) called the job posting "a stunning display of hypocrisy" that is proof positive that the Liberals are saying one thing about

tobacco and doing another, while Tory backbencher John Baird (Nepean-Carleton) accused the Liberals of cozying up to big tobacco.

Amidst all the heat, McGuinty has pledged to cancel the position immediately in favour of a new agricultural portfolio mandated to transition Ontario farmers away from tobacco crops. Ontario Health Minister George Smitherman welcomed the decision to delete the tobacco specialist position. "My job was to put this guy out of work anyhow," he told the *Star*. —CHRIS BOUTET

MONEY

Layton wants no credit where credit's due

OTTAWA—With last week's throne speech setting a rather conservative course of action for Prime Minister Paul Martin and the federal Liberals leading up to an expected election later this year, federal NDP leader Jack Layton tried to score some direct hits for the Canadian left.

As the Liberals prepared their throne speech, Layton proposed that Martin pursue policies to protect consumers from gouging by lenders, credit card companies and utility companies. He'd like to see Canada follow the lead of four U.S. states, where citizen-run utilities boards oversee the rate system and have the power to either approve or deny fee hikes. "Under the NDP's plan," the NDP's policy paper states, "the board would be entitled to communicate with other consumers to highlight increases in fees, rates or service charges, with information circulated through the corporation's bills. The board would also be empowered to represent other consumers to regulatory agencies such as the CRTC, and be provided with justifying evidence for increases in fees such as bank service charges."

Who would pay for the boards?

According to Layton, the chartered banks would pick up those costs.

But the banks aren't just targets of the NDP's energy-board policy; the party also wants the feds to force financial institutions and their credit-card partners to help relieve consumers of more than \$44 billion in collected Visa and MasterCard debt. (The combined credit card debts of Canadian citizens is currently greater than any recorded annual budget deficit in the country's history. It appears that governments aren't the only ones being forced to pay huge interests payments due to financial mismanagement. According to a Scotiabank study issued at the beginning of the year, the average Canadian family owes nearly \$67,000 in credit card debt, mortgages and lines of credit. The Bank of Canada reports that Canadians spent more than \$222 billion in consumer credit in 2002.)

The NDP want to see credit card rates—often much higher than 15 per cent and, in the case of store credit cards, more than 20 per cent—capped at five per cent over the prime Bank of Canada lending rate. If that plan were enacted, no Canadian would be paying more than 10 per cent credit card interest today. "There is scant justification for maintaining high credit card interest rates during a period of steadily declining interest rates," the position paper says, "making the need to cap credit card rates at five points above prime a necessity."

The NDP also wants to see the government come down hard on private lenders like Money Mart, which offer cheque-cashing services and payday advances for people who can't be served by the chartered banks. These places are alternatives for those who can't get lines of credit from banks or need to cash cheques immediately and can't afford to wait for a hold to come off. The NDP wants the Bank Act changed so the interest rates charged by these cheque-cashing, payday loan spots is capped. —STEVEN SANDOR

vue
point

BY DAN RUBINSTEIN

The Cs were angry

Who really cares about the theoretical almighty force and the immovable object—I've got an updated, tangible version of the unanswerable question. What's worse: computer trouble or car trouble?

I'm not sure who to thank, but I did a direct comparison of two of the 21st century's biggest technology-induced pains in the ass recently. The same day my laptop went wonky, my car started making an alarming, possibly very expensive sound. All this in the middle of an insurance hassle—another modern-day menace—that had me waiting for weeks to get my deductible waived so I could book the body work required after somebody slid into my parked car.

The car thing was potentially much more costly. If that belt goes and takes the engine down with it.... Might as well turn up the radio, drown out the clicking noise and hope for the best. But the computer thing put all my work and personal correspondence in limbo, making me realize how much I rely on that damn machine. Gingerly driving to the computer shop, I dropped off my laptop and returned to my desk to await the techie's call; it was exactly like being under the thumb of those gods we call auto mechanics.

I experienced a strong sense of car-freedom, however, when I walked the hour to work on the day Edmonton's high was -33°C. And when I got home that night, with no computer in the house, I couldn't continue working—and I felt liberation, not loss.

My poor cross-country ski boot, with its eyelet ripped out, capped my disillusionment with technology. I walked into a cobbler shop and, expecting the worst, asked the guy if it could be saved. He looked at the boot, then at me. "Ten bucks," he said. "Give me an hour."

The car eventually stopped making that noise and the insurance adjuster tired of my weekly calls and relented. The computer is still screwed, but I'm adjusting to a life less encumbered. And the ski boot is as good as new.

So car trouble versus computer trouble? Like any theoretical question, I guess it really doesn't matter.

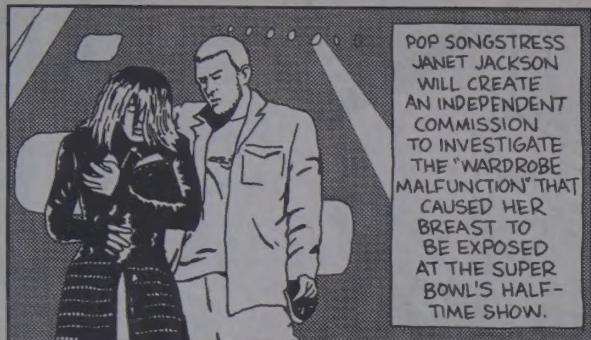
Clarification

In last week's *VuePoint* about Old Strathcona's new youth homeless shelter, an editing error made one sentence suggest that the people protesting outside Lillo's Music were displaying "reactionary behaviour motivated by fear and lack of compassion." Columnist T.J. Mair was referring to the store's opposition to the shelter. ●

TOM the DANCING BUG
PRESENTS:



Janet Jackson Orders Probe of Wardrobe Malfunction



POP SONGSTRESS JANET JACKSON WILL CREATE AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THE 'WARDROBE MALFUNCTION' THAT CAUSED HER BREAST TO BE EXPOSED AT THE SUPER BOWL'S HALF-TIME SHOW.

THE SUBJECT OF THE INQUIRY WILL BE JACKSON'S COSTUME INFRASTRUCTURE ASSOCIATION, OR "C.I.A."

WE NEED TO INVESTIGATE HOW THE C.I.A. ALLOWED THIS ESSENTIAL FAILURE OF APPAREL TO OCCUR.



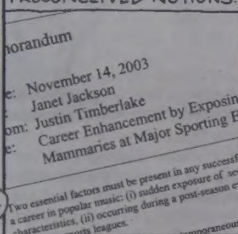
BUT JACKSON MAINTAINS SHE IS THE VICTIM OF THE BOTCHED "COSTUME REVEAL." I'M A CONSUMER OF THE C.I.A.'S SERVICES.



CRITICS SAY IT WAS JACKSON AND HER ADVISORS WHO ORDERED THE C.I.A. TO PROVIDE FAULTY BUSTIER SUPPORT.



AND KEY MEMBERS OF THE JACKSON TEAM SEEMED TO ENTER THE PROJECT WITH PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS.



IT WAS NOT MY INTENT TO BE STANDING IN FRONT OF 140 MILLION PEOPLE LOOKING SEXY AND OUTRAGEOUS, AND I'LL KEEP PROBING UNTIL I CAN BLAME IT ON THE C.I.A.



PRESIDENT BUSH OFFERED SUPPORT FOR JACKSON'S INQUIRY. IN MY ADMINISTRATION, I'D ORDER ANY SHAM INVESTIGATION TO PROTECT A BOOB FROM BEING REVEALED.



BY RUBEN BOLLING

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Haiku Horoscope

ARIES

(Mar 21-Apr 19)
"Rocking for Jesus"
Could be fun if they toned down
The "stoning" portion



LIBRA

(Sept 23-Oct 22)
Give peace a chance, and
While you're at it sample this
New meat popsicle



TAURUS

(Apr 20-May 20)
You will be shocked and
Appalled by an amazing
Assortment of hats



SCORPIO

(Oct 23-Nov 21)
You don't need drugs to
Have a good time, just relax
And we'll pull that tooth



GEMINI

(May 21-June 20)
Simplify your life
Do you really need eyebrows
And some self-respect?



SAGITTARIUS

(Nov 22-Dec 21)
Those crocodile tears
Aren't fooling anyone—we
All know you're upset



CANCER

(June 21-July 22)
Valentine's Day is
Coming up—celebrate with
A deep depression



CAPRICORN

(Dec 22-Jan 19)
Shoes, ships, sealing wax—
This is going to be one
Boring discussion



LED

(July 23-Aug 22)
The holiday that
They call "VD" will turn out
To be all promised



AQUARIUS

(Jan 20-Feb 18)
The time has come for
You to take off and leave that
Walrus with the check



VIRGO

(Aug 23-Sept 22)
There's nothing funny
About a monkey forced to
Jockey a racehorse



PISCES

(Feb 19-Mar 20)
I don't know what you
Have been told, but we do not
Sell meat popsicles



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By RICHARD BURNETT

Talkin' 'bout a resolution

I find the battles for same-sex marriage in developed Western nations like Canada, Britain and the United States to be somewhat embarrassing. It's not just that social conservatives and religious fundamentalists would rather trash their great democracies in the name of God than protect them; it's that most gay activists in those countries are oblivious to the struggle for basic gay human rights in nearly every developing nation on the planet.

Take Iran and Saudi Arabia, which both have rich, centuries-old traditions of same-sex love. Today these countries publicly execute gay men for sodomy.

Then there's Egypt, which rounds up and jails men caught cruising each other in downtown Cairo. In Croatia, skinheads toss tear-gas canisters at activists marching in downtown Zagreb's Pride parade. In Jamaica, "batty bwoys" are chased and burned to death by ultra-orthodox Boboshanti Rastas screaming "Fiyah burn dem!"

TheGully.com reported last month that in Poland "a mob of irate right-wing politicians and their skinhead sidekicks recently descended on the venerable

Jagiellonian University in Krakow, established in 1364, [to target] 66-year-old Catholic-educated philosopher [Senator Maria Szyszkowska] who dared introduce a same-sex civil union bill in the Polish Senate.... The leader of the ultra-nationalist All-Polish Youth, in a redundant flourish of medieval misogynistic and homophobic imagery, called her a witch and presented her with a broom."

And in southern Africa, one of my gay cousins killed himself because he couldn't bear growing older in a homophobic society. While the days when homosexuality was blamed on whites are over, the days of virulent homophobia aren't.

Focus on Africa magazine reports a recent cover story in "the state-owned Daily Graphic [which] read: 'Four Homosexuals Jailed 2 Years Each.' Colour portraits of the shamefaced men, all in their early 20s, accompanied the piece. Three of them stared awkwardly. The other's head was bowed slightly. He could not manage eye contact with the lens — or the world."

I believe the navel-gazing developed world has largely abandoned

such men and women.

But next month we have a chance to make a difference when the United Nations Commission on Human Rights will consider a resolution banning discrimination based on sexual orientation at its 60th session (which will run from March 15 to April 25) in Geneva, Switzerland.

"Amnesty International has been documenting abuses based on sexual orientation or gender identity from countries all over the world for more than a decade," AI states in a preparation document on the upcoming session. "These atrocities have included the death penalty, imprisonment, torture and cruel and ill-treatment (including rape and forced medical treatment), attacks on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) human rights defenders, denial of legal status to LGBT rights organizations and other forms of discrimination."

"In many countries," AI continues, "the ill-treatment of people due to their sexual orientation or gender identity provokes little outrage and those who defend such cases have themselves been attacked by the govern-

ment or other groups in society. Human rights defenders working in issues of sexuality have increasingly turned to international human rights bodies, including those of the UN, to seek protection against these abuses."

Which is why this UN session is so crucial. When this resolution was first introduced last year by Brazil and seconded by Canada, it was killed by the collective efforts of the Organization of Islamic Conference (led by Pakistan), the Vatican, Ireland, China, India and the United States. Five amendments introduced by Egypt, Libya, Malaysia, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia gutted the Brazilian text by removing all mention of sexual orientation, even from the title.

This year AI, the International Lesbian and Gay Association and the U.S.-based International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission are spearheading a campaign to lobby the 53 nations that will sit at the UN commission's 60th session. "Key countries to target in this mobilization effort include South Africa, India, Costa Rica and the United States," IGLHRC states.

Quite frankly, I don't think the res-

olution will pass this time either. Even the United Nations seems wary of recognizing gay couples among their own employees: it will now grant health and other benefits to gay couples, but only if their home country allows it.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's January 20 bulletin says the UN will first request permission from the UN gay staffer's country of origin "to confirm the existence and validity of the domestic partnership contracted by the staff member under the law of that country."

That's like asking George Dubya to suck my cock. What gay Saudi or Iranian UN staffer will dare ask for same-sex benefits?

But publicizing and drumming up support for this resolution will create boundary-breaking dialogue not just in the hallways of the United Nations, but back home in the developing world where it really counts, where queer folks need our help now more than ever. ☉

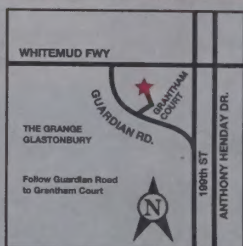
Surf to www.ilga.org, www.amnesty.org and www.iglhrc.org/site/iglhrc/content.php?type=1&id=108 to help fight for gay rights at the UN.

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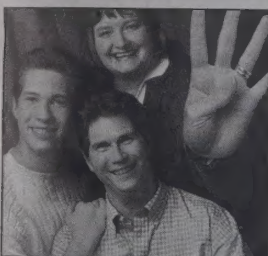
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In light of the recent seven-second delay imposed on Don Cherry during upcoming Coach's Corner segments, Dave and John have decided to add their own form of censorship (oops, time delay). As this is a different medium, just read each sentence twice, with a seven-second delay between each reading. If you find anything offensive or inflammatory, scratch it out. As for the Oilers, the team cruised into the All-Star break with two straight wins. (2-1 over Anaheim and 5-3 over St. Louis).

John: The Oilers accomplished something this past week that they haven't been able to do very often this year: win a couple of games in a row. We're approaching the home stretch of the season and Edmonton is overdue for some kind of a winning streak. They played well against the Blues last Wednesday and Ryan Smyth scored a couple of goals, with his second one coming after an uncharacteristic give-away by Norris candidate Chris Pronger. It felt good to watch someone that good make a mistake that big. St. Louis has been struggling worse than the Oil so it was a relief to see that they wouldn't be getting back on track at the Oilers' expense.

Dave: The St. Louis game was fun to watch. The Oilers came from behind twice in the game before skating away with an eventual two-goal lead. Ryan Smyth did pot two goals, but Radek Dvorak is the Oiler forward who's impressing me the most. Dvorak notched a goal and two assists in the Big Winning Streak and, as of the All-Star break, was leading the team with a plus/minus rating of plus 18.

John: What was referee Jay Sharers thinking when he gave Smyth a goaltender interference call after he crashed into the net during a scoring attempt? Blues goalie Reinhard Divis was forced to make a save on that deflection and it boggles the mind how a penalty could have been awarded. What would the call have been if the puck had gone in?

Dave: Who cares? The Oilers won the game. Did you see Mike Comrie get traded again? The former Oiler holdout is now playing in Phoenix after Coyote goalie Sean Burke returned to Philadelphia. Flyer GM Bobby Clarke loves his do-overs. He traded Chris Gratton away and got him back again. Same with Karl Dykhuis. Well, the Oiler fans will now get their chance to boo Mike Comrie twice at Rexall Place. Phoenix will be in town on March 2 and again on March 28. After a 3-0 win earlier in the

season against Philly, the Oil are 1-0 in games against Mike Comrie. With a road game in Phoenix later this month as well, the Oilers could get six valuable points against Comrie's new teammates. In fact, to guarantee wins against the Coyotes, Kevin Lowe should call up his entire farm team. After all, we all learned from Saturday morning cartoons that Coyotes always lose to Roadrunners.

John: I guess at this time of the year I have to mention the All-Star game. Mark Messier played in his 1,000th game this year and, like all previous All-Star matches, it was a meaningless game that resembled real hockey about as much as Chicago Blackhawks hockey does. I guess the reason they still play the game is because one of the financially struggling athletes playing could use a new vehicle. Maybe more of these types of games could be worked into the new collective bargaining agreement.

Dave: The NHL general managers also met in Las Vegas during the All-Star break to discuss the state of hockey, which I found odd considering the All-Star game was held in Minnesota. Apparently Vegas is a much better place to make important decisions about hockey than one of the few American regions that has actually produced NHL players. They did walk out of the meeting having made a few decisions, however: next season, for instance, goalies will no longer be allowed to roam behind the net to play the puck. They should have done this a long time ago. Anything that stops Tommy Salo from trying to play the puck will help the Oilers. ☐

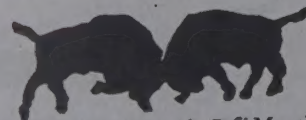
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print culture

By CHRISTOPHER WIEBE

Let's get Small

As the 2003 publishing year fast recedes, there are still a number of books by Alberta writers that I'd like to highlight. Ian Ferguson's *Village of the Small Houses* (Douglas & McIntyre), "a memoir of sorts, or sort of a memoir" about growing up in Fort Vermilion in the 1960s and '70s, came as an absolutely wonderful surprise. I knew of Ferguson as the brash promotional and directorial genius behind the early years of the improv soap *Die-Nasty*, as well as a playwright and co-author of *How to Be a Canadian*, so I half-expected his memoir to be a nonstop romp. While it does contain abundant wit and wry humour, what stands out is his tender handling of character and his finesse with tonal shadings and narrative structure. Shimmering with the tall tale feel of many Robert Kroetsch novels, Ferguson blends fact and fiction (this is Twelve Foot Davis country, after all) into an amalgam more powerful and truthful than either element.

Ferguson's family came to Fort Vermilion because his father (an extraordinary character in his own right) was fleeing a minor property scam he had perpetrated in Edmonton. *Village of the Small Houses* is full of stories involving the friends they made there—Lloyd Loonskin and Bud Peyen the ferry operator among them—and how Ferguson was cured of a devastating childhood illness by a local medicine man.

The memoir is also a vivid evocation of Fort Vermilion before it was irrevocably altered by petroleum exploration and the destruction of the small log houses families had been "squating" in for generations. When Ferguson was a child, it was a poor fur-trapping frontier town whose population was predominantly aborigi-

nal. Ferguson tells how John Wayne movies became immediately unpalatable after the owner of the local Quonset hut movie theatre showed *Billy Jack*, a film with an American Indian as a hero. An impoverished, tough-minded community that was far from idyllic, it could gather its collective strength to purge the town of unacceptable elements, such as the Catholic priest who tried to eliminate traditional religious practices.

From the opening pages when Ferguson is almost born on a ferry crossing the Peace River half-choked with ice to the final pages when he leaves northern Alberta for the bright lights of Edmonton, this memoir has an irresistible narrative energy. Fiction writer and academic Warren Cariou did something similar in *Lake of the Prairies* with his boyhood in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan. Ferguson, however, doesn't submit his childhood to Cariou's degree of intellectual probing, which makes for a nimbler but no less resonant text. Rumour has it that Ferguson, now living in Los Angeles by way of Toronto, will soon have a novel in print. I can hardly wait.

Calgary-writer Wade Bell's 1976 short story collection *The North Saskatchewan River Book* is, to my mind, the most fascinating book ever written about Edmonton. It obliterates the commonplace pleasantries about Edmonton's development penned by well-meaning historians like Tony Cashman and Roy MacGregor, who largely ignored the brutal dispossession of the aboriginal residents and the city's ethnocentric past. *The River Book* develops by interleaving passages of documentary, newspaper clippings, oral history and personal memoir—each form of discourse shaping the reader/listener's perception of experience in a different way.

Bell's long-awaited follow-up is *A Destroyer of Compasses* (Guernica), a gathering of short stories that explores expatriate life in Spain in the late 1970s. Borrowing some of the formal strategies from his earlier book, it contains stories of widely varying lengths, some brief "snapshots" of situations that cross the dramatic urgency of John Gould's *Killer* fictions with Hemingway's reportage-infused *In Our Time*. The longest, "The House of the Americans" (which centres on a North American

English teacher living in a commune-like house outside of Barcelona), is packed with sharply observed characters and dialogue. The teacher's relationships with lovers and friends are continually being undermined by the presence of an airline ticket that will allow him to leave at any time. "Chains" is a razor-sharp story about the paranoid thoughts and distrust of fellow passengers that ensues when a Spanish border guard disappears to inspect a foreigner's passport.

The fiction in *A Destroyer of Compasses* is grounded in the viewpoint of the visitor to Spain, and doesn't pretend to have an exhaustive purchase on the transition from fascist dictatorship to civil democracy. They are instead very intimate, fragmentary and anecdotal evocations of time and place viewed through particular sets of eyes, and they beautifully capture the infinite possibility, frustrating suspension and half-hearted commitment to place that characterizes the predicament of expatriate life.

And finally, fiction writer Susan Ouriou, also a Calgary resident, is an accomplished translator whose work was nominated for a 2003 Governor General's Award. Her first novel, *Damselfish* (XYZ Publishing) is about two Canadian sisters, Hope (a painter) and Faith (a linguist), living in Mexico City with their dysfunctional mother. There they have to cope with work, lovers and pregnancy while trying to heal the scars left by their Mexican father who abandoned them in childhood. Despite weak stretches when the weight of metaphor and philosophizing becomes burdensome, there is much to savour here, from the explorations of Mexican mythology and contemporary society to the dynamic of sisterhood. ●

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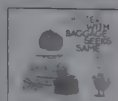
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Loaded for BEAR

How I got obsessed with the fate of the Swan Hills grizzlies—and why you should be, too

By TOM ROSCHKOV

It's the highest point in Alberta east of the Rocky Mountains and a stone's throw from the geographic centre of the province, but that's not what most of us think about when we hear the name Swan Hills. The region and town at its heart, located 200 kilometres northwest of Edmonton at the crest of a road christened the Grizzly Trail, are primarily known for their cornerstone industries.

In the spring of 1956, only a few months after the first major highway to the area was built, an oil prospector named Fred Willock drilled the well that led to the third largest oil discovery in Canada, a boom that defined the region's future. Its location amidst a wealth of trees means forestry has also played an integral role in the local economy. And of course, let's not forget the controversial Alberta Special Waste Treatment Facility, opened by the provincial government in 1987 to process hazardous waste from across the country, it's now able to treat all forms of hazardous waste as well as their residues, the town's website proudly proclaims.

Industrial triumph notwithstanding, my interest in the area—my obsession, if you will—is much more personal. Over the past five decades, Swan Hills has become a poster child for the demolition of nature. And the animal in the centre of that poster is the Swan Hills grizzly bear—perhaps the last of the plains grizzlies.

ENCIRCLED BY Lesser Slave Lake, the Athabasca River and the Little Smokey River, the peaks of Swan Hills rise from the surrounding boreal for-

est. Like the Cypress Hills in the southeastern corner of the province, the Swan Hills are an incongruous outcrop of Rocky Mountain foothills. The land is a unique array of natural systems, a transitional gumbo of wetlands, peat and forest. With its 1,210-metre elevation and rare flora and fauna not found anywhere else in the province, biologist John Stelfox in 1958 called Swan Hills "a natural museum for zoologists, botanists and geologists." Roadmaps show a vast, untouched, "green" landscape, yet nothing could be further from the truth. Viewed from the air, the region is shown to be pocked with clearcuts and carved up by cutlines that make it resemble the remnants of Christmas turkey. Within the span of one human life, a spectacular sub-alpine panorama has been devastated.

"This place was a gold rush boom town in every respect, except the people moiled for liquid black gold," Aubrey Kerr wrote about the burst of development in 1999's *Judy Creek and Beyond*. "It was an explosion of skid shacks, trailers and trucks, drilling rigs and people from all over, all recently arrived in the middle of a pristine wilderness.... Bears roamed freely through town and a hook into any stream would immediately catch a grayling or trout." But that was before health authorities issued warnings that young children and pregnant women should avoid eating wild game and fish from the area, before the once-thriving and legendary population of grizzlies was struggling to merely exist.

Before the arrival of European set-

tlers, grizzly bears ranged over all of what's now called Alberta. There were three significant hot spots: the Rocky Mountains, the Cypress Hills and Swan Hills. Rough estimates (calculated using population densities) in *Status of the Grizzly Bear (Ursus arctos) in Alberta*, a report published by Alberta Sustainable Resource Development and the Alberta Conservation Association in January 2002, suggest there were 6,000 grizzlies in the province in the 1880s. By 2000, there were fewer

FEATURE

than 850, plus 200 or so in Alberta's national parks. Although the convoluted provincial system of Bear Management Areas makes it difficult to come up with precise counts for specific areas, my best estimate is that there are around 80 grizzlies in and around the Swan Hills today.

JULY 2000. According to the weather report—not the band—it was going to be a splendid weekend. Perfect chance to go camping, I thought, an activity I've shaped into a science. Painting, drawing, photography: I had a plan. For me, a musician and artist, camping is all about observing nature and the age-old pursuit of relaxation. I might have brought along my guitar (I don't remember) but I definitely had some 12-year-old single malt liquid of the gods.

For many Albertans, leisurely opportunities like this lead due west to the mountains. But I'm interested in more subtle delicacies. So I went

north—straight north, Wabasca way. After a few days of boreal self-indulgence, I grudgingly packed up my little camp and split. Wearing my coffee-stained T-shirt, I headed south and found myself winding through the Swan Hills. I recall being in Pennsylvania as a kid; Swan Hills reminded me of that state. I was in a daydreaming state that day (although I kept my eyes on the road). Because the word "grizzly" is affixed to almost every sign in Swan Hills, my thoughts naturally turned to bears—grizzly folklore, in particular.

Dozens of local legends, both aboriginal stories and European yarns dating back to the 1840s, describe encounters with mammoth grizzlies. Early 20th-century photos show settlers (with great names like Olaf Monson, John Utas and trapper George Leas, the "Wolf King of Alberta") posing outside their cabins with grizzly hides. In a journal about his western sketching excursions, itinerant portrait painter Paul Kane writes about dining on grizzly cub on the banks of the Athabasca River: "The cubs proved to be fine eating." Swan Hills grizzlies were also regarded as fine trophy hunting. The Kinuso Museum in the town of Kinuso, just up the highway, has a stuffed bear on display (taken legally by David Griffin on May 9, 1981). The 19-year-old female grizzly was 2.3 metres tall and weighed 892 pounds; it was listed as the 64th largest grizzly in the world at the time.

Swan Hills grizzlies, in fact, are known for their size. As the interpretive display at the museum notes,

plains grizzlies had easy access to food, few enemies and lived in a temperate climate, which resulted in "maximum growth." Other than the Rockies, the Swan Hills are the wettest part of the province, producing bountiful foods like sage grass and berries that inevitably attracted grizzlies. Of course, the "sweep of civilization drove him from these plains," as the museum plaque reads, and researchers eventually concluded that the plains grizzly is not a distinct species, that they're "taxonomically" like all other grizzly bears in Alberta. Although technically not a subspecies, plains grizzlies are different, however, because they live on different terrain from the mountains where the vast majority of the continent's grizzlies have batted down. And the Swan Hills, thanks again to the sweep of civilization, are regarded as their last, albeit dwindling, refuge.

SEVERAL WEEKS AFTER my fateful camping trip, I found myself browsing through the shelves at Edmonton's main public library. I dashed over to the reference desk and innocently asked for some info on the grizzlies of Swan Hills. Surely there must be a book or two about these legendary bears, I said. There wasn't. Nothing. Only a great void and a thorough feeling of uneasiness which booted me upside the trousers.

Another fortnight or two passed and I couldn't stand it. The bears were inside my brain. Why? Because this province is my home, my local environment, and I saw the Swan Hills situation as a symptom of



something terribly wrong. I had to get some information, to take a closer look. So I did the logical thing and phoned the conservation officer responsible for the region at his office in Swan Hills. He was a decent enough chap, helpful even, and divulged a few facts: there was indeed a small population of grizzlies in the area, the Swan Hills weren't what they used to be, the dump was a problem, and so on. He seemed concerned but lamented that this whole 'plains grizzly business' was a bunch of nonsense. And that was pretty much the end of it. For him, anyway. It was just the beginning for me.

I still had too many unanswered questions, you see. I wondered what would happen to these grizzlies? Sure, the provincial government regulates grizzly hunting and enforces (at least in theory) environmental aspects of the energy and forestry industries. But who's in charge of the destiny of the Swan Hills bears? I decided to poke around a little more.

In fact, I soon launched a full-scale investigative flurry. I phoned, wrote letters and e-mailed everybody who could've helped: scientists and professors across North America, government bureaucrats, wildlife officials and every single environmental agency I could track down. I read articles and books, sought out academic collections, hounded and snooped around clearcuts and industrial installations. In short, I was annoying as hell. "Who are you?" I was asked regularly. "What are you doing? Why the interest?" I was looking for information, unsure how I'd be treated as an

ordinary citizen asking questions. Mostly, I was ignored.

I WANTED TO LOOK at these bears from every possible angle, so I took a trip to see Andy Russell. A legendary conservationist, mountain man, cowboy and wilderness guide, Russell has published 12 books (including the best-selling *Grizzly Country*) and produced a pair of feature-length movies. He also lives in my own backyard, in an log cabin just outside the boundaries of Waterton National Park.

After asking for directions at a roadside diner where the chairs were surprisingly comfortable old tractor seats, I showed up at the cabin. I banged on his door and there he was, nearly 90 years old, a big man, a little thin now, wearing a grizzly-claw necklace. I told Russell I was concerned about the Swan Hills' grizzlies and wanted to ask him some questions. He invited me in and, well, we talked about bears. He told me about some of his experiences, that he often sees bears right outside his cabin.

At one point, Russell asked me outright if I'd ever seen a grizzly bear. No, I hadn't. Not then, anyway. I felt like a character on *The Flintstones*, like I was shrinking right

there in front of him. His last words to me, just before I left, were "never run from a bear." He wasn't joking.

BEFORE NORTH AMERICA was colonized, grizzlies roamed much of the continent. The term "indicator" is used often when they're discussed by scientists. According to my *Oxford Dictionary*, an indicator is a "device giving a measurement or showing a condition or status." So the health of our grizzly population—or lack

guage we use," Paul Shepard and Barry Sanders wrote in 1985's *The Sacred Paw*. In the same book, archaeologist Marija Gimbutas writes that "the maternal devotion of the female bear made such an impression upon European peasants that she was adopted as a symbol of motherhood."

Humans have existed side by side with these creatures for centuries. Our own destiny has been shaped by their presence; we've coexisted and learned

from them. But the bickering of today's grizzly politics—debates over the upcoming 2004 spring grizzly hunt in Alberta, for instance—is unbelievable. This is a touchy subject: governments don't like to be questioned, especially by their own scientists, corpora-

difficult task, especially with many of my close friends and acquaintances employed in these businesses. All the same, the stark realities of our ever-consuming, disposable and short-sighted society are becoming almost comically obvious. Sadly, the Swan Hills grizzlies have slipped to the bottom of the political slagheap. We know that a major population lived there until the 1950s and today they are a skeletal version of their former status, beaten down, demoralized and virtually isolated. If past examples hold true, then the Swan Hills grizzlies are destined to disappear.

Sometimes, in some places, small populations of bears do survive. And over the years, a few individuals have gone to bat for the Swan Hills grizzlies—people like Al Oeming, one of the province's earliest field zoologists and a key figure behind the Alberta Game Farm. But these people have been a drop in the bucket. And do we really want a glorified zoo of bears fitted with radio collars? To rejuvenate a battered land, a battered species, a collective effort is required.

Ultimately, I think we need to stop asking if the Swan Hills grizzlies, if Alberta's grizzlies, should be classified as a threatened species. We know the answer already. ●

Tom Roschkov is an visual artist and a member of the Edmonton band SMAC. To read more about his obsession with the grizzly bears of Swan Hills, go to www.brassmonkeyproductions.com, or for more general information go to www.grizzlybear.org.



thereof—speaks volumes. (Salmon and bald eagles, by the way, are also thought of as indicator animals.)

Grizzlies are considered the great monarchs of the wilderness. That's true enough, but their role goes much deeper than that. Bears, in general, are linked deeply to the human psyche. "The bear's role in the birth of human consciousness is found in archaeological relics, in the residue in belief today in tribal cultures, and in the structure of the lan-

guage we use." It never ends. Why all the fuss? Because, in a sense, it's an admission of guilt. Because we're guilty of recklessly chewing up the planet.

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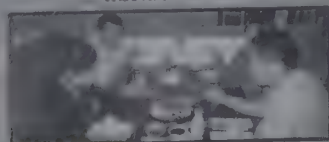


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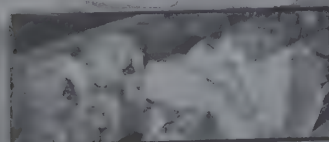
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The smell of sea-dwelling lifeforms fills the air, and the East Coast music in the background makes me feel as though I've been suddenly transported to the Rock. I'm searching for the words to describe the dining area, a compact section featuring artistic depictions of fish and unsurprisingly, lighthouses. Then it hits me: "rustic oceanic atmosphere." (Okay, so that's what it says on the menu. So sue me.) Speaking of menus, I'm loving the Lighthouse's lunch edition. The level of sophistication is greater than I'd anticipated, what with the red Peruvian trout and Cajun prawn pizza. And the dinner menu is even more in-depth, featuring a list of stuff that makes my mouth water—paella, Hawaiian bigeye tuna, bouillabaisse and California striped bass with a mandarin fennel glaze. Very nice. And the wine list seems reasonably priced, too—I see a bottle of Australian Rosemount shiraz-cabernet is \$23 and I know the same bottle will run you about \$14 or so in the liquor store, so Billingsgate obviously isn't going crazy with the markup. Being the soup junkie that I am, I start off with a small bowl of lobster bisque. The lovely orange mixture is described as having been prepared in the traditional French style, with cognac, cream and rich lobster broth. Topped with some finely chopped fresh parsley, it's incredibly flavourful. Rich yes, but it doesn't weigh me down at all, which is good because I have a picklerel fillet on the way. (Note: you can get a big-

ger portion of the bisque as a meal. I saw one come out of the kitchen. Huge.) "That's a good choice," the server tells me as I order the fish, prepared in a tangerine butter and served with green apple relish. The large, colourful plate features the northern Alberta pickerel, a side of rice and a medley of vegetables. Not just your cheap, run-of-the-mill veggies, either, but a mix of red pepper, snow peas, zucchini, cauliflower, broccoli, carrots and squash. The pickerel is good and tender, the white meat flaking apart as you gently prod it with the fork. I'm missing something, though. And unfortunately, it doesn't dawn on me until later that there was no green apple relish on the side. Damn. It would've tasted great with the pickerel... which is probably why it appears on the menu in the first place, right? Still, I douse the fish with some lemon and it's just fine. **Average Price: \$\$\$** (Reviewed 11/13/03)

82 BBQ AND NOODLE HOUSE

9118-82 Ave • 448-9988

With the growing tickle in my throat letting me know sickness would overtake me soon, I decided I needed a big, spicy bowl of some type of Asian soup. Steve had heard there was a new noodle house down Whyte—and it seemed like the perfect remedy to the evil brewing inside me. The menu is packed with all sorts of standard Chinese fare and it's too bad we're just a pair popping in for a quick bite because the BBQ duck dinner for four (at what seems like a reasonable \$65.75) looks tasty. Instead, we split a few dishes: the empire chicken, a BBQ pork chow mein and, to curb my spicy soup craving, a medium-sized bowl of the seafood hot and sour concoction. The server brings me a huge pot of loose leaf jasmine tea, helping me soothe the irritation in my throat prior to the main event. The food arrives quickly, starting with the soup. This hot and sour version has your typical tofu and strands of thinly

sliced Chinese mushrooms, along with peas, shredded carrots, calamari and baby shrimp in an ultra-thick, almost gelatinous broth. For the short while that the soup remained hot (temperature-wise), my throat feels much better. After getting through a bowl or two each, the empire chicken and the chow mein arrive. The former, served on a small, oval platter with breaded chicken chunks, mushrooms, green peppers, carrots, water chestnuts, baby corns and peanuts, is supposed to be spicy. (It had the little red chilis beside the name on the menu, for Crissakes.) It's good, yes, but provides little in the way of a kick. I have to be honest—I wasn't too impressed with the chow mein platter, either. The amount of BBQ pork amongst the bok choy and other veggies looks scant and upon further digging, we find our initial assessment to be correct. I did like the crunchy noodles, however, a nice contrast to the rest of the dish. **Average Price: \$** (Reviewed 01/08/04)

FLAVOURS MODERN BISTRO

10354-82 Ave • 439-9604

You want brave? Try opening a restaurant a few weeks before Christmas, which is exactly what the owners of Flavours Modern Bistro have done on the famous Old Strathcona stretch. Sure, you get the Christmas push, but January is downtime for most establishments. Then again, there's a reason rents on Whyte are so high: never-ending traffic. I walked into Flavours (kudos to them on the inclusion of the "u," by the way), the former location of the Bagel Tree, and was immediately impressed by the look of the swanky new spot, what with the cozy blue chairs, dark hardwood décor (both tables and floor) and the high ceiling complete with oddly-shaped alcoves on the walls. I have an intelligent, concise menu in front of me, offering a selection of salads, apps, "flavourwiches" and a few tasty-looking entrées (oh, and two varieties of eggs Benedict). I almost bite on the braised lamb shanks with a white bean and lentil ragout but I always get lamb, so I go instead for the chicken pancetta sandwich (sorry, flavourwich), featuring a grilled chicken breast, pancetta, smoked mozzarella with a roasted red pepper and garlic mayo on multi-grain bread. Basically, it's a high-end "club." In a fowl mood himself, Steve selects the five-pecan crusted chicken, a real earthy-looking dish that was served with a brown pommery mustard sauce. More people begin to file in and I decide that Flavours is a solid addition to Whyte's dining scene and not just because people are trudging along in minus-40 weather to get there. I can't think of many, if any, places on the strip that combine such an obvious level of sophistication with so little in the way of pretension and overly expensive items. The well-proportioned dishes top out at about \$16 or \$17 while the top price on the wine list is about \$40 or so, instead of a startling point. You could easily spend more for less. **Average Price: \$\$\$** (Reviewed 01/29/04)

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Griddle management

Filling up on pancakes at the local branch of venerable White Spot chain

By DAVID DICENZO

I had a big day ahead of me—lots to write and a rare game of hoops in the evening. I'm notorious for being a non-breakfast guy, but that's something I'm slowly trying to change, so I thought it would be the perfect time to get an early fuel-up that would last me well into the night. Where to go, where to go? I hopped in the car and started driving down Calgary Trail when I remembered the **White Spot**. I'd never eaten there before but I do recall writing up a brief description of the place for some city website and I knew for a fact they served breakfast. So in I went.

White Spot is a chain—but a western Canadian one, which isn't so bad. Founder Nat Bailey was a crafty Vancouver entrepreneur who got the business up and running way back in the '30s, a few years after opening the country's first drive-in restaurant following a car ownership boom in the Lower Mainland. Smart guy. It's since expanded throughout B.C. and into Alberta, with the Calgary Trail locale being the only one of its kind in Edmonton (and the farthest east of any White Spots).

This particular branch understandably has a bit of a hockey motif going on, with Original six jerseys displayed alongside some old-school metal blade skates and various pictures adorning the walls. I figure they must have that new Joe station tuned in on the radio. Someone told me it's a mix of all sorts of crap and when the rotation goes from old Depeche Mode to Macy Gray and then to Phil Collins's "Easy Lover," I'm convinced. Where the hell's Andy Travis when you need him?

One nearby table of two business guys are boring the hell out of me with their pseudo-wheeling-and-dealing (the salesman is a particular annoyance) so I gaze out through the open Venetian blinds. Unless you're heavy into parking lots (or the Zellers), the view isn't what you'd call engaging.

Doesn't matter, though—I'm there to fill the tank.

I go big, passing up on some of the staple breakfast items in favour of the renowned pancake sandwich, which the menu describes as a stack of buttermilk pancakes with an egg on top and a choice of bacon or sausage on the side. Funny thing, that's exactly what it was.

RESTAURANTS

Whenever I indulge in some pancakes, I tend to wanna eat 'em up real fast. The reason being, pancakes get cold quickly. That's not the case at White Spot, however. Your syrup comes to the table in a little personal dispenser—and get this: it's warmed up in the kitchen. That's such a simple touch but it honestly cures the one and only problem I have with pancakes. It's like those glasses filled with fluid that you put upside-down in the freezer—the only problem with beer is that it gets warm but in one of those glasses, it only gets colder as you drink it.

These are ingenious ideas, people.

I TACKLE MY pancake sandwich, topped with an over-easy egg and a couple slices of bacon. I got a nice cup of fruit on the side and for once in my life, I honestly had no beef with pineapples—the cubes in my small bowl, like the melons, orange slices and seedless red grapes, were bursting with moisture and sweetness. The heap of yummy pancakes in front of me was proving to be a far greater challenge than I'd anticipated. Don't

get me wrong: they were great (albeit a step below the buckwheat banana variety I had at a Calgary spot called Break the Fast once, the most fantastic pancakes I've ever experienced in my entire life). They were crisp enough on the outside and fluffy in the middle, but I had two problems. For one, I'm not used to eating that early in the day and I was getting full in a hurry. Second, even though I knew I needed to eat, I was scared to do so because the tingling throat and increasingly itchy face I had been experiencing all morning prior to trekking to the White Spot suggested that my second allergic reaction in the past few months, to God knows what, was on the horizon.

It's actually tough eating breakfast when you're preoccupied with figuring out how you'll get your carcass to a hospital on a moment's notice.

I eventually ripped through everything but half the stack and the generous heap of butter before I was ready to call it quits. I hadn't succumbed to the allergies yet, so I thought it was best to get outta Dodge quickly. "It was bigger than I thought," I tell the waitress clearing my plate, who fully admits the trademark pancake sandwich is "a lot of food."

That's western Canadian hospitality for ya. And Nat Bailey was certainly all about satisfying the people. ●

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MILL CREEK CAFÉ

9562-82 Ave • 439-5535

Other than a bevy of nice-looking sweets and baked goods, sandwiches are pretty much the order of the day at Mill Creek Café. Kate orders the Montreal smoked meat sandwich, while I eventually get around to choosing the salmon salad. Then come the questions. "Swiss, cheddar or cream cheese?" the counter girl asks. Kate says Swiss, I say cream. "Toma-

to, cucumber and sprouts?" Yup. "Pickles?" Sure. "Hot, honey or Dijon mustard?" Kate says yes to the former and after a bit of deliberation, I pass, figuring there's no need to add mustard to the salmon. "Mayo and butter?" Neither. Mill Creek bakes everything fresh each day and as I attempt to wrap my mouth around the massive slices of grainy whole wheat bread with pieces of carrot in it, I think to myself that it looks awfully inviting. I had taken note of the fact that Kate asked for hot mustard and I patiently awaited her reaction. Sure enough, it

came. "Whoa," she says after the first or second bite. It's actually really hot stuff—I try a nibble and some of the mustard actually burns a small nick on my lip. These sandwiches are huge and because baked goods are in our immediate future, we pack up the remainders and head back to the counter. This time, I'm only slightly more decisive—a piece of chocolate cherry loaf (a mere buck and change) and a slice of lemon meringue pie, though the chocolate peanut butter bars were crying out at me. **Average Price: \$** (Reviewed 12/04/03)

SMOKEY JOE'S HICKORY SMOKEHOUSE

15135 Stony Plain Road • 413-3379

I figure—er, I mean, I reckon—Smokey Joe's was conceived as a replica of old-fashioned prairie cuisine, or at least an homage to it. License plates from all over the continent dot the walls and the menu, bound in wood, has headings like "Samwiches" and "Young Un's Dinners." The ranch theme is a little schmaltzy but for a guy soon to vacate the province, it's enough to bring a small tear to my eye. The coolest thing has to be the pink butcher paper they use for tablecloths—that's a nice touch. My comedic dining buddy Steve is along for this trail ride and he busts a gut when he spots the veggieburger on the menu. "I bet you it's never been ordered," he says. Well, neither of us are gonna be the first so instead, we put all our eggs in one high-cholesterol basket: the sampler for two. It includes, in no particular order, two roasted quarter chickens, pork ribs, turkey, ham, beef and two of Smokey Joe's famous ultra-hot wings.

Oh, and garlic toast. "We're out of wings tonight so I'll give you another quarter chicken. Is that okay?" our host asks. Deal! You get your choice of three sides with the sampler so Steve and I agree on cornbread, beans and potato salad. I don't notice much green anywhere in the restaurant so we see no sense in having any on our plate. Back a century ago, a cowboy wouldn't have been clamouring for a side salad, right? I swear there's a strained look on our server's face as she lugs out the plate with what Steve refers to as "a pile of meat" on it. "There, go wild," she says. All of the homemade barbecue sauces are lined up in front of us—Smokey Joe's sells them on the premises, along a variety of the meats, including jerky—and it's time to get to work. On this snowy, frigid night, the platter gives me a much-needed dose of summertime. The 'spicy taste of the smoked meats, the richness of the beans and the creamy potato salad make me forget that it got dark at 4:30 p.m. that day. **Average Price: \$\$.** (Reviewed 12/11/03)

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By RICK OVERWATER



Photos by Tina Mironid

How can you accurately gauge the quality of a ski resort on a bluebird day with the temperature barely below the freezing point? There's little doubt that the marketing gurus pimping increasingly expensive lift tickets and all-inclusive packages at most resorts will bristle at this question—but if the snow is good, the sun is out, the hill is steep enough and you're having the time of your life, you could be on almost any ski hill, right?

This, as I blast full-tilt down the Milky Way, a wide-open blue cruiser between the Silver Star resort's Summit Chair and Comet Six-Pack Express, is the dilemma I face when it comes time to recount my visit to others. What is it that sets apart this little gem at the north end of British Columbia's Okanagan valley?

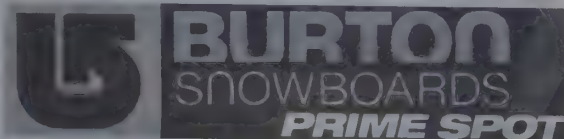
One clue comes very soon, during a lunchtime conversation with Jeff Homer, the director of Silver Star's ski and snowboard school. He points out that though there's still plenty of powder stashes to be found, you have to take into account the fact that it hasn't snowed at Silver Star for several days. Yet the snow, which initially fell in the form of B.C.'s much-bally-hood "champagne powder," is still soft, loosely packed and easy to set even the most neglected snowboard edge into. I have to admit that the

snow would usually be a bulletproof sheet back home in Alberta by now. "I think interior snow is better," says Homer. "The snow is different than Whistler-Blackcomb where you can get rain and snow all in one day or Banff where you get good snow but it's really cold. What sets Silver Star apart is that it provides excellent snow quality from November all the way through to March."

Homer is an ex-Ontario native who relocated to Vancouver but found himself visiting Silver Star so often he decided to simply move here and get a job. He pauses, mid-explanation, as our Long John burgers, named after the popular on-hill pub we're sitting in, arrive at our table. I'm later told this watering hole is where most of the beer flows after the hill closes—perhaps that's because you need to offset the rather arresting bite of their signature burger's jalapeño mustard. When our conversation about Silver Star's snow resumes, I learn that it's important to consider not just the snow itself, but where it falls.

At 1,915 metres, Silver Star sits low enough that summers reveal the hill as more of a beautiful flower-strewn grassland than an actual mountain. "Our runs are summer-groomed," says

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Silver Star

Continued from previous page

Homer. "We're out there cutting the grass at fall so when we do get the first snowfalls, we can ski on very little base because we're skiing on a meadow as opposed to rocks."

But don't let all this talk of grass, flowers and meadows fool you into thinking that Silver Star is all easygoing terrain. Hell no. The hill basically divides into two areas, the Putnam Creek area, serviced by the Powder Gulch express high-speed quad, and

the Vance Creek area immediately accessed from the day lodge area or your hotel. Only 20 per cent of the resort's 107 marked runs are green, with 50 per cent blue and 30 per cent either black diamond or double black diamond. And almost half of those blue runs are in the Putnam Creek area of the mountain, noted on the ski-area map as being "steeper and more challenging than the blue runs in the Vance Creek area."

Not that you'll get to sample enough of them in one day to get a true sense of things. There's too many

runs and some of them are too long. The snow is in too good of shape to bother with the terrain park, an assortment of rails, spines and funboxes at the end of the Middle Dipper run in the Vance Creek area. Instead we try to use up the last of the powder stashes in the perfectly spread-out glades alongside the blue Whiskey Jack and Spruce Meadow runs. Homer figures there are still some powder lines that can be found in the Attridge face area to the left of the resort village, but we opt for high speed down in the Putnam Creek area.



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Indeed, the blue runs are steeper over there and lengthy routes like the Gypsy Queen and Sunny Ridge offer more velocity than most riders and skiers will willingly muster. It's easy to catch sizable air over the occasional rollers that punctuate those runs and it's almost a shame that it doesn't allow you much time to marvel at the incredible view of the Okanagan Valley, lightly layered with gauzy clouds and rimmed by snow-capped mountains. By the time we pick our way through the steepers offered on a few black diamond runs, some littered with unforgiving moguls and some freshly groomed, the day is done.

OUR ONLY OPTION NOW is to do some night skiing off the Summit chair, an almost surreal experience due to the eerily lit trees, all stark, ice-encrusted white against the black nighttime sky. Followed by some mid-to-high-end dining at Putnam Station,

the more affordable of Silver Star's two fine-dining restaurants (just two of the 14 different places you can eat depending on the time of day) it's the perfect way to wrap up a long day.

And it's here, over a rack of damn good ribs and a pint of Okanagan Springs Pale Ale that the individuality of Silver Star finally registers. With 2,725 skiable acres (1,135 hectares), it's not the largest hill around but it's set up with enough amenities to service all comers on a busy day and the runs are laid out in an easy-to-access, almost intuitive manner. Accommodations—in our case a comped room at the mid-priced Silver Lode Inn, a Swiss-style hotel—are mere steps from food, beer and lift tickets. It's a convenient resort, boasting the recognizable attributes of your favourite mega-hill. Yet somehow Silver Star, a modern world-class resort that still feels like the locals' little secret, is just plain different.

It's as simple as that. ●



Drinking and chair masters: a day at Silver Star

So the night crews found four full kegs stashed on one of the runs at Silver Star, the story goes. No word how they got there, or what exactly could be done with four kegs of beer on a ski hill. And who'd be doing it.

The sun rose cold over the mountain. The fantastically old two-seat Summit chair bobbed us up, at times within throwing distance of the adjacent Comet Express, a brand-new sixer chair. "New chair?" I asked.

"Yeah," replied my chairmate. "Biggest chair in Canada."

"There was a quad there before?"

"Yep."

"And I heard the old quad on the back side of the mountain was replaced with a new quad?"

"Yep. I heard the two old quads were sold to some place in Iran."

"Iran?"

"Yeah."

We were silent for a while, our chair swaying far above the ground. "Why aren't we on the fast one?" I asked. "Do you think I could jump from here?" he responded, about 15 feet up.

FOR ME, the rush here at Silver Star wasn't in the speed, or the air, or even the descent. It was in the critical turning moments, when you jab your pole into the snow and sort of hop around the mogul. The rush was in that lift you got between the time

you made the turn and spotted the next one. It's a very methodical, thoughtful descent. Of course, the more experienced do it quickly, hopping around these lumps that matched their size with fluid ease.

The gigantic moguls and a good share of the more challenging runs are on the back side of the mountain here. The new Powder Gulch quad services the back runs, with a T-bar from the lift station back to front-side access. The old chair, the Putnam Creek Express, was also a quad. An article on canadiansnowpatrol.com says the new chair is "much smoother and more comfortable. Skiers and boarders alike have complemented the ease of loading and the shorter lift lines." The only visible difference between the new and old chair is an electronic gate which prevents skiers from rushing to the chair too quickly. I would hope the chair is faster, too, but I didn't notice any difference.

"Do you think it's money?" I asked.

"I know it's money," my chairmate replied. "Money money."

We couldn't figure out why they upgraded two of the fastest chairs on the mountain but left the old doubles in service. But we were certain there was a good reason. "That guy's ski just fell off," I pointed. A few chairs up, a couple was peering into the snow bank below.

"My face is going to fall off," my chairmate said.

A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE are sliding or side-stepping down White Elephant, a black run with one particularly vertical stretch. Someone has lost his ski and walked to the base of the run, where it flattens out. His ski is stuck in a patch where it's hard to notice until you've gone past it and look back up. You can't see very far though, because the horizon is quick to intersect here, where it's so steep.

"This is hard," a man says. There's a pack of us clustered near the top, trying to pick our track. "It's like a sea of deadly breasts," he says. "Deadly, frozen breasts."

I picked a particularly cold day to go to Silver Star. After lunch, I skied to the bottom of the six-chair and began the lengthy trip to the back side. Two older men rode up with me. I hitched my scarf up over my nose and was totally thrilled when it stuck to my upper lip with a wet sort of glop.

"Shotta schnapps?" one guy asked the other, producing a plastic flask from nowhere. The other took it. "Little fire for the trip ahead," he said, then drank.

"Yeah," the first said, taking it back. "Little fire in the belly." I was jealous. I recommend a flask of your own if it's any colder than -10°C. —
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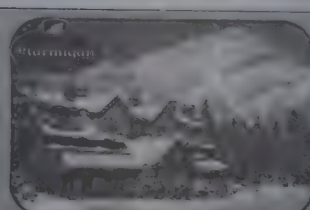
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Photo courtesy of Mount Norquay

Mount Norquay

Will our writer beat the experts to the bottom, on her bottom?

By CAROL MIYAGAWA

Life is like skiing. Some days you're gliding along, effortlessly sailing over the bumps, manipulating the turns with great ease, when suddenly you fall flat on your bum and start skidding out of control. That's what happened to me on a recent ski trip to Mount Norquay, one of Canada's oldest and most historic ski areas. Thanks to the quick action of one of the resort's snow hosts, however, I walked away at the end of the day.

The morning started out with much promise. As my husband and I drove west towards Banff, a thick fog lifted just as the peaks came into view. I was excited about skiing at Norquay, located just minutes from the Banff townsite. Until the 1990s, the ski area consisted of a single double-chair leading to the steepest terrain on the mountain. Not my idea of a fun day on the slopes. Today, though, Norquay is more my speed, boasting one double-chair, three quads and more than 30 runs gracing one of the most magnificent mountains in the region.

Linda and Blaine, the competent and enthusiastic snow hosts assigned to give us a tour, greeted us at the entrance with smiles and a warm welcome. "So, what kind of skiing do you like to do?" Linda asked. "No black diamonds, please," I replied hastily, remembering that Norquay is renowned for its challenging double black runs. After a quick swoosh down Speculation, a green run

which provides plenty of entertainment for skiers on the chair lift overhead, our next destination was the Spirit chair. Just then, the sun broke out, the clouds disappeared and it was a perfect blue sky day.

THE BEAUTY OF SKIING at Mount Norquay is that you rarely get cold on the chairlifts. All the lifts are in the trees and the slopes run down the lee side of the mountain, sheltering you from the effects of windchill on a frosty day. According to Linda, you almost never encounter a white-out on the slopes either, even when it's snowing heavily.

The first hint my day was about to hit some rough patches came as I was exiting Spirit. As I slid off the chair, I accidentally bumped against Linda while struggling to stay on my skis. (Things like that *always* happen when you have an audi-

AREA

ence.) After successfully skiing Abacadabra, one of the resort's steep blue runs, my hosts thought I was ready for the Mystic Express. As we rode the chair, we caught glimpses of Banff and the beautiful Bow River valley spread out below us.

Although Norquay staff groom all blue and green runs every night, a serious lack of snow in December and January meant conditions were far from ideal. At the top of Imp, I was the last to start down the run. After my first turn, I accidentally crossed my tips and sent myself tumbling onto my stomach, my legs played out beneath me. Soon I was rocketing downhill, feet first, completely out of control.

Not knowing what else to do, I tried hard to dig in my edges and drag my poles in the snow, but I

continued to slide. Racing down, Blaine attempted to slow me but I slid right past him. With my husband still below me, I said a secret prayer that he'd try to rescue me, but he didn't. (I'm still not speaking to him.) It was beginning to look as if, for the first time in my life, I would beat everyone down a steep run, even the experts. But, suddenly, my skis hit something solid. Another skier? A tree? Blaine? Fortunately, it was the latter and I was safe on the slope.

FEELING AS WOBBLY as a novice skier after too much snowplowing, I suggested a break. Over lunch at Norquay's luxury lodge with Rob Cote, the resort's director of marketing, he chuckled when I joked that perhaps I should learn how to self-arrest. Full of good food (Norquay has its own chef), we were soon ready to be on the hill again—the bunny hill, that is, a chance to test out the Sundance conveyor lift, which is new to Norquay.

In the afternoon I fell twice getting off the Cascade chair and nearly tripped over a doorstep while entering the lodge, conveniently blaming all this on a leg muscle I'd recently pulled. For safety's sake, I opted to sit in the sun where the worst thing that could happen to me was sunburn. The beauty of Mount Norquay and Cascade Mountain soon made me forget the bad ski day I was having. Engrossed in the scene before me, I watched experts maneuvering the double black diamond and novices struggling down the green runs, while young and old rode up the bunny hill together. Above them, daring snowboarders flew off the halfpipe.

They all seemed to be having a great time. I was too—now that I'd stopped skiing. ●

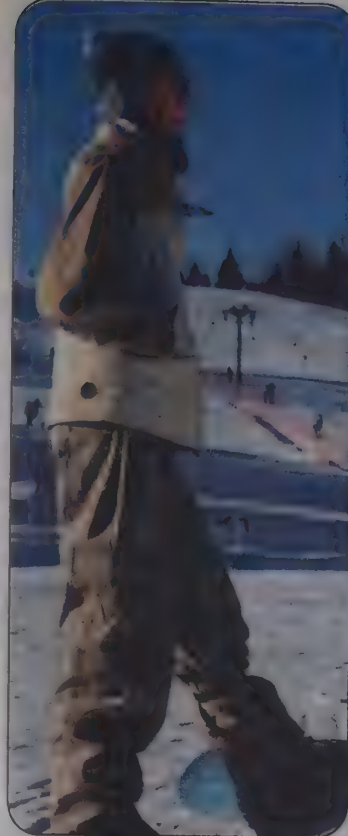
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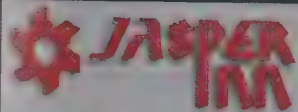
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Local

Rabbit Hill - 70cm base, 0cm of new snow, all lifts and runs open
Snow Valley - 70cm base, 0cm of new snow, all lifts open

Alberta

Castle Mt. - 100-248cm base, 20cm of new snow, all lifts and 59 runs open
C.O.P. - 90cm base, 0cm of new snow, all lifts open
Fortress - 120-142cm base, 0cm of new snow, 5/5 lifts open
Lake Louise - 122-184cm base, 0cm of new snow, all lifts open
Marmot Basin - 72cm base, 14cm of new snow, 7 lifts and 82/84 runs open
Mt. Norquay - 126-164cm base, 0cm of new snow, 5/5 lifts and 28/28 runs open
Nakiska - 85cm of new snow, 3cm of new snow, 5/6 lifts and 32/32 runs open
Sunshine - 159cm base, 8cm of new snow, 12 lifts and 107 runs open

B.C.

Apex - 147cm base, 67/67 trails and 5/5 lifts open
Big White - 215cm base, 112/112 trails and 13/13 lifts open
Chrystal Mt - 137cm base, 3/3 lifts and 24/24 trails open
Fernie - 240cm base, 0cm of new snow, 10/10 lifts and 107/107 runs open
Kicking Horse - 143cm base, 1cm of new snow, 96/97 runs open
Kimberley - 115cm base, 0cm of new snow, 6 lifts and 75/75 runs open
Mt Washington - 289cm base, 46/50 trails and 6/8 lifts open
Panorama - 104cm base, 0cm of new snow, 9/9 lifts and 120 runs open
Powder King - 294cm base, 2/3 lifts and 24/24 trails open
Powder Springs - 165-300cm base, 31cm of new snow, all lifts and 26/26 trails open
Red Mountain - 191cm base, 0cm of new snow, 4/5 lifts open
Silver Star - 162cm base, 0cm of new snow, 107/107 trails and 11/11 lifts open
Sun Peaks - 129cm base, 0cm of new snow, 9/10 lifts and 117/117 trails open
Whistler Blackcomb - 210cm base, 30cm of new snow, 33/33 runs and 200/200 trails open
Whitewater - 220cm base, 0cm of new snow, all lifts open

U.S.A.

Big Mt - 206cm base, 5cm of new snow, 8 lifts and 86 runs open
Big Sky - 203cm base, 7cm of new snow, 17/18 lifts and 150 trails open
49 Degrees - 144cm base, 0cm of new snow, 52 runs open
Great Divide Ski Area - 152cm base, 80/139 trails and 4/6 lifts open
Lookout Pass - 208cm base, 0cm of new snow, 3/3 lifts and 23 runs open
Mt Spokane - 111cm base, 0cm of new snow, 44 runs open
Schweitzer Mt - 172cm base, 0cm of new snow, 6 lifts open
Silver Mt - 167cm base, 0cm of new snow, 6/7 lifts open
Sun Valley - 162cm base, 0cm of new snow, 19/19 lifts open

All conditions accurate as of Feb 11, 2004



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SnowZone



By ALEXA LOO

Pitztal opera

Whenever the Canadian snowboard team is in Europe for a long time—five weeks in this case—we look for inexpensive diversions to stay sane. Fortunately, Sabine, the lady who rented us an apartment, was also keen to get out and practise her English. So she took me to Hochzeiger, one of the ski hills in Austria's Pitztal valley where we were training, to watch a weekly event staged by local snowboard and ski instructors.

The evening kicked off with a torchlit ski parade. As music played, a second wave of Pitztal instructors came down the mountain in formation. In North America we usually consider formation skiing a bit, er, dorky. But this was surprisingly cool! The instructors were doing a great job of actually *carving* their skis and skiing in a *pattern*. After the skiers, the snowboarders came down on freestyle boards. They were followed by snowboarders on alpine boards, again in formation.

Off to the side was a jump where the crowd of 1,200 people was wowed by ski and snowboard instructors doing backflips and spins. Near the bottom of the run was a rail on which the instructors performed "rail slides," where they skid sideways along the rail. (I tried this once and landed bent over the rail cursing my own stupidity for trying such a crazy stunt.)

I was a little alarmed when a guy on a natural luge came tearing down the hill heading right towards the crowd. At the last minute, however, he pulled up on the front of his luge and came to a halt just before careening into the crowd.

The show wrapped up with fireworks and another torchlit parade, except this time the torches were pseudo-rockets mounted on the backs of the skis. Afterwards everyone retired to the bars to share a drink and catch the final of the men's World Cup ski race in Schladming, Austria. Much to everyone's delight, Pitztal racer Benni Raich won the slalom that evening. Naturally I stayed in the bar to help the locals celebrate.

Our hostess, Sabine, also thought it would be nice if we spoke with the children in her son's English class. On our last day in Pitztal, my coach and I went to the elementary school and

answered a multitude of questions, ranging from "Is Austrian food better than Canadian food?" to "Can I have your cellphone number and send you text messages?" We were quite impressed with how well the 10-year-olds spoke English.

After the question period and nearly three weeks training in the Pitztal valley we loaded up the car and headed off to Maribor, Slovenia for a World Cup race. As we entered Maribor, the sky was dominated by the race hill brilliantly lit up for night skiing. The smell of coal permeated the air; there's definitely an eastern European feel to the place. The slope is fairly steep and even from top to bottom with firm snow, which promised a good race. The bleachers set up at the bottom of the race hill for a recent women's World Cup ski event were being dismantled as we arrived. Even though the snowboard World Cup would be a crowd-pleasing night final, it seemed that the snowboard event wasn't expected to draw the same crowds.

Getting to our hotel in the centre of Maribor was interesting. We turned the car into a little alley, where an attendant sitting in a red booth pressed a button and the pillar barring our way sank into the ground. The car rumbled over the cobblestones through the centre of town, which looked like through a pedestrian-only zone. Only cars belonging to hotel guests, in fact, are permitted into the town centre.

Jasey-Jay Anderson was quite happy with the location of our hotel. "Look!" he exclaimed. "We're right next door to the Canadian embassy!" We looked around bewildered. Then we saw the McDonald's. Before the end of our four-day stay, nearly every World Cup racer was spotted in the McDonald's at least once. How could you not be in prime racing shape with fuel like that?

Once we got settled at the hotel it was time to do a little exploring and find somewhere other than "the embassy" to eat. After a few minutes I'd already snapped about 20 pictures of churches, buildings and sculptures. I also found Rostov, an interesting little restaurant that specializes in "international cuisine," including Slovenian, "ex-Yugoslavian," Greek, Italian, Thai and Japanese specialties. I chose some Slovenian items, not just because they

LOOK TO

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NEXT WEEK

Red Mountain & A Special Feature!





ski tips

By COLIN CATHREA

Everything sold is new again

Last week I was looking at a picture of a ski racer taken in 1960, when, all of a sudden, I noticed how similar his body position was to what I'd witnessed earlier in the day during a World Cup GS race televised from Austria. The GS descended down a tough, ice-covered pitch with all the visibility of a frosted window. These guys were fighting for their lives going down a hill most of us would have given up on. Sure, their skis were parabolic beauties with razor-sharp edges, but what remained consistent was the stance they took over their skis to edge, turn and, most importantly, avoid falling on their asses.

The guys skiing in 1960 would have been about five minutes slower than their present-day counterparts, but only because of their equipment. Whenever I complained about my equipment back in the day, my coach would reply, "Give that crap to anyone on the World Cup circuit and they would kick your ass so bad you'd cry."

I guess that's true for most sports. If I traded clubs with Tiger there wouldn't be a snowball's chance in Hell I would get anywhere near his score. So back to the matter at hand. What's remained consistent from 1960 to 2004? Gravity, for starters. Ditto for the hills, the snow,

were the cheapest, but because I like to get a real taste of the places I travel to. I discovered that Slovenian food is not particularly distinctive; the vegetable soup and roast pork, although tasty, were no different from dishes I've eaten at home.

By 11 a.m. the morning of our snowboard event, many athletes were wandering around in front of the hotel wondering what to do with themselves. The qualification for the race began at 2 p.m. and the finals weren't until 7 p.m. All of the Canadians had decent first runs and made it into the second round of qualifications. Aimee Newton and I had pretty good second runs, except for a few mistakes which caused us to narrowly miss finishing in the top 16 and qualifying for the finals. I came in 17th and Aimee was 19th—our best World Cup results in a long time, but not quite what we were hoping for.

Once again Jasey-Jay was the lone Canadian in the finals with the rest of us cheering at the finish line. He did not disappoint. He systematically knocked out his competitors in each successive round. In the final against world champion Sigi Grabner, Jasey-Jay was ahead after the first run by more than one second. In the second run, Sigi made up some ground and was given the victory when Jasey-Jay fell on the second-to-last gate. We departed Manibor celebrating our personal bests and were determined to be better in

the wind and everything *except* your equipment. And let me say this: it's way more fun to ski nowadays than it was 40 years ago, especially with improvements like warm, dry clothing, comfortable boots, high-speed quads, excellent grooming equipment... the list goes on.

Riding a clean, hard edge is the best thing about skiing today. In the '60s, when you put that extreme edge on your Simpson's Sears specials by tipping over your rubber lace-up ski boots, you got the skis on edge all right, but nothing much happened. A controlled skid from side to side. Skiing sounded different back then. Almost every turn sounded like you were cleaning your driveway with a metal shovel. That's why powder skiing was as good as sex. Or was it?

Average intermediate skiers and boarders can now lean way over and carve a groove into the snow that supports a tremendous amount of weight. When you master this type of turn, it feels like you're being shot out of a cannon across the hill. When the conditions have been just right, I've left my poles at the lodge and tried carving those big "lie so far over that your hip and hand are on the snow" turns.

The game of progress has been a simple process of aligning your body structure to allow maximum power to flow through it. This was true 40 years ago and it remains true today. It's just plain mechanics. Skiing on a big edge is big fun. Ski equipment manufacturers are hip to this. Look what they're offering today: snowblades, radical carvers, all-mountain carvers, race carvers and on and on. They all have one common element: they provide immense fun provided you're willing to put them on edge. You no longer have to cruise at Warp 10 to get the exhilaration associated with this equipment. There's a miracle waiting and it's right under your feet. ●

Berchtesgaden, Germany. And what do you know—Jasey-Jay won his first gold medal of the season there. ●

Alexa Loo races for Canada's national snowboard team



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7 - 10 pm
friday february 12
opening reception
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MUSIC • this week

thursday

With a plethora of would-be superstar rock acts prowling bar stages around the city every weekend, it might be hard to distinguish one from the next. However, when you're a band like **Vedanta**, that shouldn't be much of a worry. Over the past couple of years, they've become a group to watch, with an appealing hard rock sound that wouldn't sound out of place on the radio. Check them out at the Urban Lounge, where they're sharing the stage with Willisbong.

friday

Alex Murdoch is certainly moving up the ladder of success. With his last album, *Polyphonic*, the former Edmontonian caught the ear of the music industry, which led to a deal with the heavy hitters at Aquarius/EMI. A new EP is on its way, and Murdoch is bringing his band—also called the Polyphonics—back to town, this time at the Sidetrack Café. Also on the bill are Ann Vriend, Alun Pigguns and another hot property, Matt Masters.

saturday

Ah, Valentine's Day—an entire 24 hours devoted to romance and chocolate addiction. So after that romantic dinner, get down to Spruce Grove's Horizon Stage for a taste of some saucy Cajun and zydeco zing with Alberta native **Crystal Plamondon**. Check out Jenny Feniak's conversation with the francophone sensation in this week's Root Down column on page 37. If you want to rock out, you could always go to the Powerplant and check out the local boys in Rake.

sunday

It's a house music lover's paradise tonight. Halo is presenting Chicago native Diz alongside resident Junior Brown and Vancouver's Todd Omotani. Fans of progressive sounds should get down to the Century Grill for a unique, intimate party entitled *A Stellar Night of Passion*, featuring David Stone, DJ Tag and downtempo from Malfunkt. And it's all about the techno at Escape Ultra Lounge, when America's **DJ Dan** hits the decks with local Neal K.

monday

Got a hankerin' for some blues? Then head over to Blues on Whyte for their weekly jam session, featuring **Tim Lee and the Revelators**. An Ontario native, Lee moved west after years playing with groups like the Severe County Alistars and Mel Brown and the Homewreckers, perfecting his bottleneck slide along the way. He's also got an impressive musical scope that includes funk and R&B, as well as all your favourite foot-stompers.

tuesday

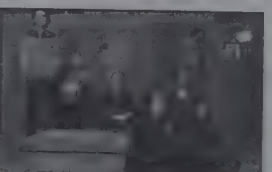
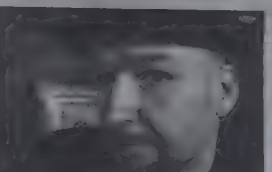
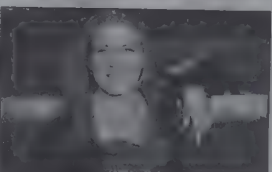
Years of touring and performing have begun to pay off for Vancouver roots act **The Clumsy Lovers**. After several indie records sold off the side of the stage, the band have signed up with Nettwerk to release their latest rockin' Celtic bluegrass opus, *After the Flood*, which you can find in better stores everywhere. And you can see them live when they hit the Sidetrack Café tonight with Paul Bellows.

wednesday

Award-winning Maritime trio **The Ennis Sisters** bring their kitchen party to St. Albert's Arden Theatre tonight. The charming, dynamic, good-natured team of Maureen, Teresa and Karen has delighted audiences around the world, and their recent album, 2003's *Can't Be the Same*, sees them revisiting the roots of their sound. The Glengarry Bhoys will add some Scottish flavour to the night.

newswire

Sarah McLachlan and Nelly Furtado top the nominations for The **2004 Juno Awards** with five nods a piece, while Edmonton's John Stetch and Sandro Dominelli are both nominated in the Traditional Jazz Album of the Year category; the awards will be broadcast on CTV from Rexall Centre on April 4.... After months of speculation, **The Pixies** will begin their reunion tour in Winnipeg on April 14, and will perform in Edmonton on April 18 at Red's.... The 2004 Juno Weekend in Edmonton will kick off on April 2 at the Agricola with **The Juno Cup**, a charity hockey match between Canadian music celebrities and NHL alumni, which will benefit the CARAS Music Education program; tickets will be available starting March 4 at all Ticketmaster locations.... Canuck bands Billy Talent, Lillix and Simple Plan will join Bad Religion, the Sounds, Thursday and NOFX on the **2004 Vans Warped Tour**, which will stop in Calgary on July 15; pre-sale tickets are available at warpedtour.com.... British DJ **Judge Jules** has rescheduled his appearance at Escape Ultra Lounge for April 1, after being forced to remain in England during a freak snowstorm earlier this month.



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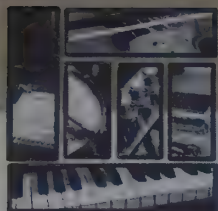
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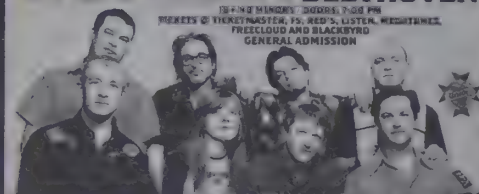
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MUSIC



music notes

By PHIL DUPERRON
AND JERED STUFFCO

Stabbing westward

The Daggers • With the Skinny and the Twin Fangs • Sidetrack Café • Thu, Feb 12 While most folks are looking for love at this time of the year, the Sidetrack is out for blood. What better way to celebrate Valentine's Day, they figured, than a theme party based on Stephen King's *Carrie*? Heart-shaped cards are for wusses—instead, dress to impress in your

favourite bloody dress while sucking back cheap Bloody Marys with the Daggers. The Calgary-based foursome are making the trip north to pierce our hearts with the glorious sounds of punk rock 'n' roll.

The last time these boys were in town, New City was in its old digs and their 2002 disc, *Right Between the Eyes*, was hot off the presses. They were in the midst of recording a follow-up disc this summer when guitarist Graham Evans decided to call it quits. "It took a while to replace Graham," says singer/guitarist Brad "Spaz" Paffe. "He'd been with us since the beginning and had a lot to do with putting together the songs that are going to appear on the [new] CD. Rather than release a new disc with an ex-member only, we figured we'd work in the new guy as well. So we just held off on the recording for a while until [new guitarist Kevin O'Brien] was ready to go in and do some recording, which he's done now. So we're just putting the

finishing touches on it now."

A fresh guitarist wasn't the only new thing in store for the Daggers. Down in Cam Hayden's basement studio, the band made its first foray into the digital age and were pleasantly surprised. "It's the first time I've ever recorded without tape," Paffe says. "You can actually fit a whole studio in a guy's basement, believe it or not, because you don't need a huge mixing room. You just need a guy sitting there with a computer." Everyone knows computers save time and money in the recording process, but does it sound as good in the end? "I actually can't hear the difference," he replies. "If I can't hear the difference, I don't really care." (PD)

The self-righteous brothers

Married to Music • With the Floor and Fake Cops • Seedy's • Fri, Feb 13 Self-righteousness isn't something that most rock 'n' roll bands will readi-

fake cops
&
THE FLOOR

HEART ATTACK
Valentines Day February 14th

SEEDY'S
1001-104 STREET
1/2 PRICE MARTINIS MIDNIGHT
HOT CHICKS HOTTER WAX

Whiz Kidz and Riff Randells •

The Shit Tank • Sun, Feb. 5
REVIEW The bawling about on the show is the only interesting part of a show that's most provocative for its lack of provocative content. Rancid and the rest of the band, along with the Whiz Kids, whose house there's guaranteed to be a lot of burning, and a lot of fire—guaranteed, because the band is guaranteed once Nik Kozub leaves us for Toronto? The Whiz must go on. A little later, Vancouver's Riff Handies took to the stage and blasted out a killer set of astringent, laden, nub-nugum punk. Their part harmonies, tattoos and power chords are wrapped up in skin-tight jeans—snaps not to like? Not surprisingly, the not girls in the crowd were doing their best to prove they're tougher than the boys. Course, most of the boys were too busy leering up at the girls to notice. (G)

ly admit to. However, when Adam Slack of Vancouver's Married to Music describes his band, he doesn't pull any punches. "We're not self-righteous as a people," he explains over the telephone from the V-Dot, "but I think we are a self-righteous band."

So what does that mean, exactly? Can we expect Slack and his mates to bring a white flag and some "make trade fair" pins on tour with them? Not quite. "I say 'self-righteous' in the sense that we want to be positive and stand up for the things we believe in," he says. But Slack says MTM prefers to tackle personal politics rather than the social issues/legislative debates/international diplomacy kind. "We're not really heavy into the political side of things. A lot of bands talk about materialism and stuff, but we try and focus on the positive, like standing up for yourself and not doing things that are going to run you into the ground. We try and stay away from the downers."

With an outlook like that, it's no wonder many listeners have mistaken the band for a bunch of Christian rockers. "We get that a lot," shrugs Slack. "None of us are religious, but our music seems to touch on similar ideas—we have a song called 'Miracles' which has nothing to do with religion, but people always seem to bring that up."

Religious or not, they must be doing something right. Despite forming only a year ago, the young trio has already released a debut CD, *The World's Gotta Go Round*, which piqued the interest of Watchdog, a subset of SL Feldman and Associates, a mega-agency devoted to booking newer bands. Still, don't expect Slack and his bandmates to sign the first record deal that comes their way. "If there was a magic record deal out there," Slack says, "we might do it. But seeing as compromise is such a huge part of signing, especially with a major label, it doesn't really enter into the picture for us." (IS)

Dial M for Murdoch

Alex Murdoch and the Polyphonics
• With Ann Vriend and the Dropouts, Alun Pigguns and Matt Masters • Sidetrack Café • Fri, Feb

13 It's been quite a year for Edmonton ex-pat Alex Murdoch. In just 12 months, not only has the young singer/songwriter completed a whack of touring gigs and completed a full-length album, but he's also inked a major-label record deal with Aquarius/EMI.

"I'm getting pretty tired," admits Murdoch, while still managing to sound energetic. "I've been living out of a suitcase and wearing the same clothes for the past nine months." Despite Murdoch's busy schedule, with the album due out in April and a hot single to be delivered to radio by the end of the month, let's hope that he's got some power bars stashed somewhere. "I'm pretty stoked about the album, though," he chimes. "Once it comes out, I'll be fine. It's just this time waiting for the record to come out that gets tiresome."

Murdoch and his band the Polyphonics laid down 12 tracks for the disc, which was recorded at Vancouver's Mushroom Studio last October under the watchful eye of Dale Penner (Holly McNarland). "I'm really excited about the record coming out," Murdoch says, "because then we'll be able to hit the road, and I love playing live.... About half of the vocal tracks [on the disc] were cut right off the floor, and most of the instruments were totally live."

And as any local music fan will attest, Murdoch and the Polyphonics' live show is tighter than Dave Navarro's leather pants and just as shiny. With any luck, the CD will finally land him on the playlists of radio stations everywhere. "I've never tried to make something that would fit in on radio, though," Murdoch says. "Melody is such a beautiful thing—it's just what I do." (IS)

The neverending Cory

Cory Danyluk and Sarah Card • With Mike Lent, Maria Dunn and John Gorham • Masonic Hall (10318-100 Ave) • Thu, Feb 19
After spending years as a denizen of Edmonton's thriving music scene, Cory Danyluk has seen his fair share of new albums come out. Most bands find a willing bar, invite their friends

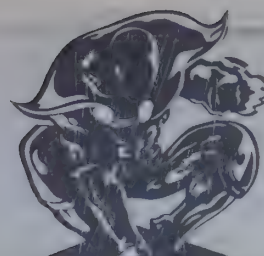
down for a musical party, hopefully sell a few discs and that's the end of it. So when he and partner Sarah Card were planning an event to highlight the music from their new album *Jaybird* they decided to do something different. Normally, Danyluk and Card perform as a duo—he plays guitar and harmonica while she handles the fiddle—but for this show they've invited some of the players who helped turn *Jaybird* into a reality to share the stage with them.

They also chose an intriguing venue—the downtown Masonic Hall, which used to host gigs of all kinds, but has fallen strangely silent of late. Danylyuk says the inevitable jokes about having to learn secret handshakes in order to get into the show have even added an air of mystery to the evening. In fact, though, it's a perfect venue for an intimate performance. "We wanted to get it out of the bars," Danylyuk says, "and put it into more of a listening room environment where we could have candles on the tables and sort of put people closer to the stage. I think it's that kind of music. It's danceable and it rocks when it needs to, but we're more interested in folk clubs and festivals and things like that."

laybird was recorded by engineer/producer Colin Lay at Beta Sound last winter. It's a beautiful mix of folk and country music shot through with a healthy dose of the blues. "When I was about 15 or 16 the first instrument I learned to play was harmonica," Danyluk says. "I had lots of influence from James Cotton and stuff like that. That bluesy sort of thing, that's why it's got that feel to it. That's how I play—it's not really folk harmonica."

Their previous disc, *Wooden Nickel* (released under the name Prairie Soul), had more instruments like drums, piano and Chapman stick filling in the sound. But with *Joybird* the duo decided to employ a simpler live aesthetic. "With this one," Danyluk says, "we stripped it down and based it around the harmonica interplaying with the violin, the acoustic guitar and the vocals. That's what we wanted to build the sound around." (PD)

Opel Demos



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Foundations: DJ Dennis Zaz and Rackman Powers

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Reclams, 9pm-midnight; no cover

BLIND PIG PUB AND GRILL

Patrick Sean Earl, 7pm; no cover

BLUES ON WHYTE The Big 8-3

Jam Funk

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O'BRYNE'S Joe Bird's Ine jam;

9-10pm

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Metropolis Sound Crew, no

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STANDARD Element: House/top

40 with Nestor Delano, Rob

Allen

URBAN LOUNGE Sexybeast,

DJ Gilligan; no cover

MON LIVE MUSIC

BLIND PIG PUB AND GRILL

Patrick Sean Earl, 7pm; no cover

BLUES ON WHYTE Blue

Mondays: jam with Tim Lee and

the Revelators and special guests

L.B.'S PUB Open stage with

Randy Martin; 9pm-2am

PROVINCIAL MUSEUM

THEATRE Aboriginal Magic 'n'

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Jimmy Whiffen

SIDETRACK CAFÉ Open stage

Mondays: Ben Spencer; 9pm, no

cover

DJS

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE

rock with Penny and the Jets

DUSTER'S DJ Dan

FILTHY MCNASTY'S Musical

Mondays, with DJ S.W.A.G

O'BRYNE'S Hip Mondays

Industry night with DJ Finnegan,

live music

TUE LIVE MUSIC

BLIND PIG PUB AND GRILL

Patrick Sean Earl, 7pm; no cover

BLUES ON WHYTE The

Perpetrators

DRUID Open stage with Chris

Wynters

LEGENDS Open jam hosted by

Gary Thomas

O'BRYNE'S Celtic night with

Shannon Johnson and friends,

9:30pm

SHERLOCK HOLMES (DOWNTOWN)

Sam August

SHERLOCK HOLMES (UPPER)

Jimmy Whiffen

SIDETRACK CAFÉ The Clumsy

Lovers, Paul Bellows, 9pm, \$8

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Session: hosted by Thom Colub

Combo; 8pm (door), 9pm

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UPPER L.B. (Westmount)

friends, 9-10pm

PLEASANTVIEW HALL

Northern Bluegrass Circle Music

Society bluegrass jam; 7-10pm

REVEREND Nightclub

open stage hosted by Brian

Gregg; 8pm

SHERLOCK HOLMES (DOWNTOWN)

Sam August

SHERLOCK HOLMES (UPPER)

Jimmy Whiffen

SIDETRACK CAFÉ The Neckers

The Rockers, 9pm, 5/30

(door)

UPPER L.B. (Westmount)

Long Way Down, \$5

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breaks with Trpswitch and

Quinn

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE

Glitter Gulch: country, roots

Holdover Beethoven

What the world needs now is another Cracker and Camper Van Beethoven tour

By PHIL DUPERRON

Tracing singer/guitarist David Lowery's musical pedigree is a demanding job.

But here goes. Since forming Camper Van Beethoven back in 1983, Lowery has had his fingers in a host of musical pies. Probably best-known for their college radio mega-hit "Take the Skinheads Bowling"—recently used by Michael Moore in his docu-

mentary *Bowling for Columbine*—Camper released more albums than most artists do in a lifetime before calling it quits in 1990. Lowery then went on to form Cracker, a more traditional roots/rock outfit, and enjoyed further underground and mainstream success with hits like "Teen Angst (What the World Needs Now)" and "Low." In 1999 Lowery

PREVIEW

ROCK

got together with his old CVB bandmates for a Clash tribute project and went on to re-release some old CVB material on Pitch-a-Tent, the label he started up to put out their quirky music before signing to Virgin Records America in the late '80s.

Once they rekindled a comfortable relationship, Lowery took members of both bands out on the road as the Cracker Traveling Apothecary and Revue. "We just weren't really sure if we wanted to call it Camper Van Beethoven," Lowery says during a stop in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. "We didn't really want to do a Camper reunion tour or anything like that until we felt like we were doing new songs, and we've been working on a new record right now for probably over a year."

In the meantime and the in-between-times Lowery has produced and collaborated with a plethora of other artists, including Counting Crows, Sparklehorse and Leftover Salmon. "I like playing music all the

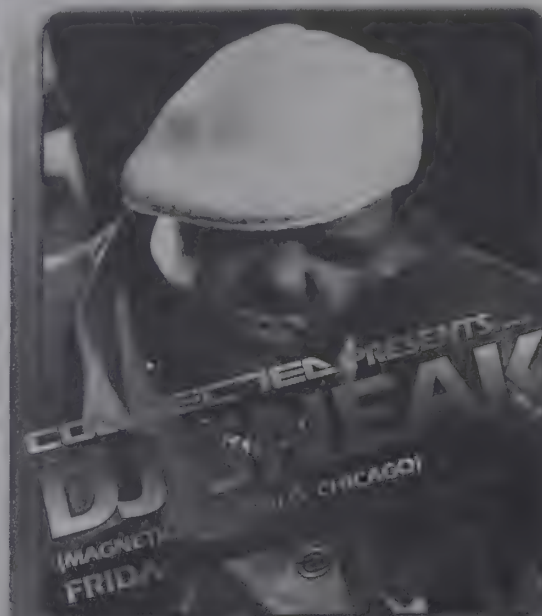
time," he says. "When I first started getting into this with CVB, we'd put out a record every eight or nine months—as soon as we'd record something, y'know what I mean? And once we got into the major labels, they were like, 'No, no, no. We gotta basically think about this,' and stuff like that. So in a way what I ended up doing to deal with the major-label stuff is I would do my collaborations or produce other people's records. So really, I was still doing a record every eight or nine months but the Cracker or CVB albums were coming out every year and a half or two years, the way the major labels like you to do it."

Now Lowery is pulling double duty with both bands on tour

together, reintroducing fans young and old to the weird world of Camper Van Beethoven. "It's a lotta work," Lowery says, "but man, we're having a blast. Lot's of people have been coming out to the shows. It's turning a lot of people onto what Camper did, which is good, 'cause I think a lot of Cracker fans kinda knew Camper Van Beethoven but they've never really seen them live. I don't know how they know about Camper but there's definitely a sort of punk rock, emo kind of following for CVB and it's nice to see a lot of people like that at these shows too. It's interesting."

THE BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE exposure probably didn't hurt either. "That's definitely part of it," Lowery agrees, "but I think it probably started before that. I'm not sure why." In fact, "Skinheads" was already so ingrained in the back of people's psyches Lowery once got in a heated discussion with a group of drunken Danes who were convinced it was really a Manic Street Preachers song. "Never argue with drunken Scandinavians," Lowery warns me. "They turn back into Vikings."

CVB fans will have to wait until later this year to hear a new album, but they can make do in the meantime with a recently unearthed, newly available recording the band made of Fleetwood Mac's *Tusk* back in March of 1987. Cracker fans, meanwhile, can content themselves with *Countrysides*, which came out last year. It's a collection of gritty southwestern country covers the band came up with while playing incognito under the name Ironic Mullet. "Cracker and CVB have always had a strong thread of country and roots music through our rock," Lowery says, "so we wanted to do more of a specifically redneck country album. So what we did was play under a pseudonym just to work up our repertoire. Most of the people didn't even know who we were or what we were doing. We were just playing covers as far as they were concerned—y'know, 'Play some Skynyrd' and stuff like that. What we did was really a kind of method acting to develop the set and the *Countrysides* record is a result of that experience." ●



Don't miss
David Lowery (Camper Van Beethoven, CVB)

David Stone (Camper Van Beethoven, CVB)



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bpm

By DAVID STONE

Chilly scene in winter

Perhaps winter is dragging on a bit much, don't you think? Haven't we had enough? At least the cold doesn't seem to have stopped the clubs from jamming up our calendars with quality shows. Good thing it's Valentine's Day this Saturday—with so much love from the DJs and the clubs, you can't help but fall in love with the music all over again.

The weather did, however, stop **Judge Jules** from making it to Edmonton a couple of weeks ago. A freak snowstorm froze up air travel from England, preventing the hard dance DJ from making the journey to play at Escape Ultra Lounge on January 29. Nevertheless, the massive crowd at the club didn't seem to mind, as they partied hard right to the very end with Neal K and myself on the decks. Happily, the Judge has rescheduled his gig for April 1, and Neal and I are back on the bill. If you've still got your ticket, hang onto it because it will be honoured at the new show.

As well, the kind folks at United also

opted to allow people to use those same tickets to come back to Escape this Sunday to see American techno king **DJ Dan**. The boy is back in town after a lengthy absence to promote his new *Mixed Live* disc for Moonshine, and he's packing a box of new body-jackin' tunes. Neal K is also on the bill providing some meaty tech-house flavour, so if you like your music hard and jumping, this is the place to be. And Escape is a wonderful space—I can hardly wait to play there again.

Of course, some people like it deep and soulful. Junior Brown at Halo is good at that sort of thing, and he's invited a couple of friends back to town to share the booth with him on Sunday night as well. Coming all the way from Chicago is **Diz**, who's probably one of the most down-to-earth DJs working the house circuit, while Vancouver's Todd Omotani is coming down to jam.

Perhaps you're looking for something different and intimate. Local promoters Stellar have decided to follow up the breakthrough success of their much-buzzed-about New Year's Eve party at the Citadel Atrium—presented alongside Halo and Donna, by the way—with another cool happening, this time at the Century Grill (3975 Calgary Trail). The event, entitled **A Stellar Night of Passion**, features yours truly spinning some techy progressive flavour, while DJ Tag drops a mixed bag of funky flavour and Malfunkt starts off the night by supplying some quality downtempo grooves. Doors open at 10 p.m., and cover is \$8.

The Stellar events have been going on for a year now, but it wasn't until

NYE that the group found itself on the map. Throughout their history, though, they've concentrated on challenging stereotypes about dance parties, planning events around the mantra of "good concept, good music, good party" rather than relying on a big-name DJ to sell the night. They deliberately seek out unique venues, and this year they are planning several more events on the scale of their NYE triumph. This Sunday's party will be an excellent opportunity to get a taste of what they're about.

Also on Sunday down at the Standard, Nestor Delano and Rob Allen are putting together a mix of top 40 and house with the club's **Elements Long Weekend Party**. The Connected crew are going to be busy over the next few weeks, starting with their co-promotion of the legendary **DJ Sneak** with Red's in West Edmonton Mall on Friday, February 20. Unfortunately, Junior Brown will be unable to play that night—and he's pretty bummed about it—but Nestor and I will try and make up for it. Following that party comes the long-awaited arrival of Om sensation **Kaskade** to the Standard on Thursday, February 26. If you dig the sound of Mark Farina, then you must get your boogie in order and get a ticket.

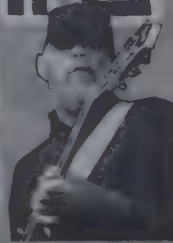
Finally, it's good to see Ariel and Roel back into the scene with their new Wednesday night at the reopened DecaDance. **Fluid** is the brainchild of United's Greg Wynn, who wanted to create a weekly that featured the duo back behind the decks, weaving their deep and funky tech-house action. Welcome back, guys. ●

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root down

By JENNY FENIAK

Crystal gazing

Crystal Plamondon • Horizon Stage

• **Sat, Feb 14** One of the world's most renowned Francophone musicians hails from the tiny northern Albertan town of Plamondon, which was founded by her family after they moved north from the United States in an effort to preserve their unique culture. "When we get together for family reunions and parties and when we're playing music and telling stories, [it's] the only way you can

keep your culture," says Crystal Plamondon with just a hint of a French accent. "In Louisiana they've kept their culture [alive] by music and by their food... so for French people anywhere in the world, music and food are a big thing."

Plamondon's dream from a very young age was to be a professional singer, and music has always been the one constant in her life, through marriage, motherhood, divorce and now the "empty nest syndrome." She kicked off her professional career with a 1989 performance on CBC's *The Tommy Hunter Show*, which led to an Alberta Recording Industry Association (ARIA) Award in 1992 for her cassette-only debut. She released her first independent CD, *Carpe Diem!*, in 1993, but after a self-titled release in 1996, Plamondon needed to remove herself from the hectic music business. In 1999, the CBC helped Plamondon accomplish precisely that when a project twinning French-speaking countries transplanted the singer/songwriter to the West

African country of Benin to collaborate with a local musician for a special broadcast. "After my Africa show," she says, "I started getting calls again for some great stuff that I couldn't resist. So I started taking them and then of course, I had to realize it was either pull out completely or get a new album and get going." She chose the latter, releasing *Plus de Frontières (No Borders)* in 2002.

Even though she hails from north of the border, Plamondon's music has been most warmly embraced in Louisiana, perhaps because her Acadian Cajun sound is so similar to zydeco. Most of her lyrics are in French, her first language, but lately Plamondon has been concentrating on writing more songs in English and has just returned from recording a few of them in Nashville. It will be a while before those songs make their way onto a full album, but in the meantime Plamondon will release an entire album of her upbeat "Zyde-Cajun" tunes in Louisiana later this year.

That awkward age

The Clumsy Lovers • Sidetrack Café

• **Tue, Feb 17** It's been a slow and steady haul for the Clumsy Lovers but this week, after eight years of playing their twisted assortment of rock-based Celtic bluegrass tunes, the five-piece Vancouver band has made its biggest turn yet. Somewhere in Omaha, Nebraska, just hours before their new disc *After the Flood* was slated for release, singer/guitarist Trevor Rogers was wondering himself if the band's foray into the world of major labels would actually manifest itself at the stroke of midnight.

And apparently it did. The morning after I finish my chat with Rogers, his band's quaint and personal website is replaced with a slick, polished site offering more than just daily diary entries from the band's founder and bassist, Chris Jonat. The biggest addition was a merchandise section hawking everything from posters and T-shirts to, naturally, copies of *After the Flood*, the Lovers' sev-

enth album and their first for Nettwerk.

The Lovers have come a long way since the mid-'90s when they were playing occasional gigs at Irish pubs followed by weekend jaunts around the West Coast. "It was more like a hobby band up until three or four years ago," Rogers explains. "Basically it just became economically viable at that point. We were able to opt out of our jobs as the shows got more successful and more people started coming." These days, the Clumsy Lovers spend nearly 300 days a year performing mostly south of the border, where they attract audiences from a multitude of genres. That eclectic crowd is probably inevitable, given their habit of drawing upon everything from Celtic, bluegrass and rock to old-time country ballads, pop tunes and ska riffs.

"You know, we can fit in at an Irish festival or we can fit in at a bluegrass festival, but it's not exactly either or both," says Rogers. "We'll get hippie kids out at the shows, we'll get old bluegrass guys with big grey beards, we'll get college girls—you know, like a whole mixture. ●

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My life as a Fake Cop

You can argue about their true influences, but the Fake Cops' post-punk is the real thing

By JERED STUFFCO

What is it with all the post-punk references in the alternative music media lately? With the explosion of New York dance-punk weighing heavily on critic's minds, it seems that every music scribble with a copy of *Substance* in their iMac and a hard-on for Gang of Four pulls out the same list of influences every time a new record crosses their desks.

According to Jon Hopkins, guitarist with Calgary rockers Fake Cops, with all the post-punk referencing going on, it's been easy for critics and younger rockers to forget about the past decade and a half of American indie rock. "We hear a lot about Liars and the Rapture and the Ex Models right now," he says over the phone

PREVIEW ROCK

from Calgary, "and that makes sense because they're popular and doing pretty well. But from where I sit, I'm going off about the Jesus Lizard more than any of those other bands. A lot of the mid-'90s Touch and Go indie rock—that stuff was pretty much missed the first time around. This

stuff coming out now is the result of at least 10 or 15 years of music, not just one period of it."

Still, Hopkins admits that the current post-punk revival has injected some much-needed energy into the rock scene, which seemed to be all but dead at the end of the '90s. "It's getting reinvented in a pretty interesting way," he says, "by a lot of good bands right now who write good songs and play well."

Likewise, as tempted as you might be to compare them to Wire and the Birthday Party, a listen to Fake Cops' debut EP is just as likely to inspire allusions to Big Black and Six Finger Satellite. "Six Finger Satellite is a perfect example," agrees Hopkins. "You haven't heard their name come up through all this commotion, but it seems pretty obvious to me that Liars have listened to quite a lot of that stuff, and yet there's been no mention of them. Either way, we're talking about all great bands."

Recorded at Calgary's Sundae Sound, Fake Cops' EP plays out like a

history lesson in left-of-centre guitar music. Combining the discordant melodic sensibilities of indie rockers past and present with a bouncy, bass-heavy rhythm section, Fake Cops' rock 'n' roll workouts should have little trouble finding an audience with white-belted nouveau-rock kids and their older indie rawk brethren.

IT'S A DICHOTOMY that's mirrored in the band's development. Despite having an average age of 28, the band (which is rounded out by drummer Ian Russell, bassist/vocalist Brooker Buckingham and guitarist Jordan Tettensor) didn't cut their teeth on jaded, beer-sozzled barflies at smoky rock clubs; instead they got their start rocking out for underage kids at Calgary all-ages hall shows.

"It's kind of a funny story," Hopkins says. "Largely, we started out with a string of all-ages shows, and we were never really too sure of how well it was going to go over because we were different from what was going on at the time. When we finally got a

couple shows under our belts, we were surprised that the kids responded really enthusiastically, because for us, those shows were really about gaining some confidence. We owe a lot to that scene, we're really grateful because it's given us that energy."

According to Hopkins, after a half-decade dry spell, the Calgary rock 'n' roll scene also seems to be picking up again. "The thing with Calgary," he says, "is that, culturally speaking, it always seems to have a fad-driven element to it. I remember when the DJ culture came through with a lot of energy and the rock 'n' roll audience dwindled. What's been happening now is that there's been a pretty steady buildup of people making this music, and that's the foundation that you really need—people who want to play it and the audience that want to seek out the music and support it." ●

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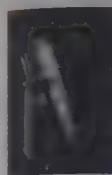
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street vision

By SEAN AUSTIN-JOYNER

From the Jungle to Babylon

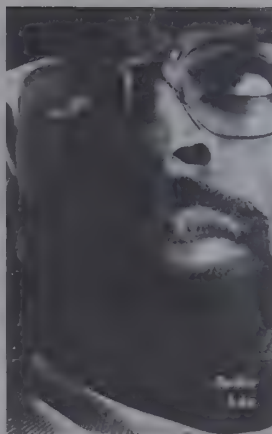
Let's face it: even in 2004, even in casual conversation, the subject of interracial dating can hit a few nerves. As recently as just before World War II, many politicians lobbied to keep public places like restaurants and bars segregated solely to prevent race mixing. Needless to say, interracial marriages were illegal in most U.S. states at that time. While the lines are blurring rapidly thanks to multiracial children and younger, more liberal mindsets slowly gaining power, there's still a definite barrier preventing interracial relationships from becoming truly accepted in mainstream society.

So it's refreshing when filmmakers are brave enough to set themselves up for disapproval by making films exploring people's prejudices. After all, you'd be hard-pressed to find someone who'd admit to being discriminatory, even though studies have shown that all people evince some degree of prejudiced behaviour.

One director who's used to showing his mug in the spotlight when it comes to race issues is Spike Lee. Blasted for his portrayal of Italian-Americans in *Do the Right Thing* and attacked by women for his creation of a sexually liberated female in *She's Gotta Have It*, Spike went on to offend almost everyone while simultaneously opening their eyes to the exploitation of black people by the entertainment industry in *Bamboozled* (a film I'll be talking about next week). So I'm sure Spike was completely prepared for controversy in 1991 when he made *Jungle Fever*—and not just from the white community, but the black community as well. And he would've received that reaction too, had anybody seen the movie.

Jungle Fever's protagonist is Flipper Purify (Wesley Snipes), a married black architect whose affair with his Italian secretary Angie (Annabella Sciorra) leads to the inevitable breakup of his marriage and turns him and Angie into targets for society's racial distrust. Not only do Flipper's neighbours, friends and a waitress (an early acting turn by Queen Latifah) disapprove of the relationship, but Angie's brothers come to blows with her and Flipper as well. In subplots, Halle Berry (in her movie debut) and Samuel L. Jackson play characters falling prey to the undertow of drug abuse and prostitution.

Jungle Fever isn't bad, but it's still one of Lee's more forgettable films. Most people can probably belt out Stevie Wonder's catchy-as-hell theme



song at the drop of a hat, but few can describe the movie's plot in any detail. *Jungle Fever* is the race-relationship

movie everybody knew about but nobody saw. The 2001 release *Brooklyn Babylon*, on the other hand, is simply unknown. The two films have eerily similar premises, but differ wildly in tone and approach. *Babylon* stars Tariq Trotter (a.k.a. Black Thought from the hip-hop band the Roots) as Solomon, an aspiring Rastafarian musician who becomes infatuated with Sara (Karen Gomeran), a Jewish girl, after a chance car accident. Sara eventually returns Solomon's feelings. But their neighbourhood, which is already divided by cultural differences, doesn't approve. Solomon's career is placed in jeopardy as friends, managers and the listening public slowly turn on him. Meanwhile, literally on the other side of the tracks, Sara's family resorts to nearly militant tactics to prevent the relationship from continuing.

The film closely mimics the tensions that existed in the Crown Heights area of Brooklyn during the early '90s, when a black youth was hit and killed

by a car in a Jewish motorcade. In retaliation, a group of blacks stabbed and killed a rabbinical student from Australia. Riots ensued.

What *Brooklyn Babylon* fails to project successfully are the similarities between Rastafarianism and Judaism. Oddly, director Marc Levin alludes to those similarities in an essay included in the DVD edition of the film, and wouldn't seem to have faced many problems exploring them on film. Still the movie boasts strong performances by co-writer Bonz Malone and David Vadim as Sara's headstrong and short fused brother. The Roots, Lord Jamar (Brand Nubian), Slick Rick, Common, Frisco Kid, Spragga Benz, Mad Cobra and Bountv Killer all make cameos.

Even taken together, these two films don't cover all sides of interracial relationships. What they do offer, however, are unique angles on two similar stories that pose a lot of provocative questions which viewers must answer for themselves. ●

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SEASON 1

COURTNEY LOVE AMERICA'S SWEETHEART (VIRGIN)

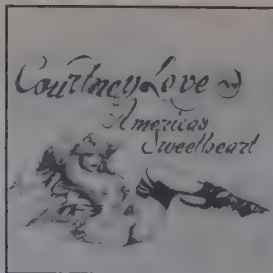
Move over Christina and Britney—your little pissing match is going to have to take a backseat to music's real queen of attitude. At least that's the message that comes through loud and clear on Courtney Love's *America's Sweetheart*.

Love has never been a stranger to controversy, from her days as the bitchy widow of Kurt Cobain who took Universal Music to court to her stint as the lead singer of Hole—and her new "solo" (using this term rather loosely) album shows every sign of making Janet Jackson's titty-flash seem like much ado about nothing.

Love rocks out with a rapper's attitude throughout *America's Sweetheart*, and, just like a modern rap star, she calls out another rapper right off the top. "Hey God, you own me one more song," she screams in the lead single, "Mono." "So that I can prove to that I'm so much better than him... Him... hrm? Eminem!"

While the rest of the material veers from punk that sounds like Hole's pre-major-label, pre-Kurt days to pop songs which would allow Love to challenge the likes of Beyoncé and Madonna for face time, there's no doubt that she wants to show the world that she has more attitude than ever, from the busy pencil portraits that accompany the album's liner notes which see her on her knees, fondling her naked breasts. It's all about shock value.

But as always, doubts about her sincerity remain; she works with the likes of Linda Perry (who's written for Christina Aguilera and Pink) and long-time Elton John collaborator Bernie Taupin, and yet her studio band includes the likes of Pixies bassist Kim Deal, garage rock legend Wayne Kramer and guitarist Scott McCloud of Girls Against Boys and New Wet Kojak fame. Is it a case of too many cooks spoiling the broth? Not really, but there's a nagging feeling that, like most rap albums, the music is really the product of the people behind the star. ★★ ★ —STEVEN SANDOR



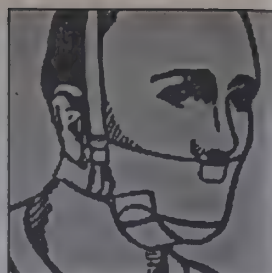
PILOT TO GUNNER GET SAVED (ARENA ROCK RECORDING COMPANY/RYKODISC)

A couple of years back, Pilot to Gunner's *Games at High Speeds* made them indie-rock darlings and got them grouped along with NYC rockin' neighbours like Les Savy Fav and Interpol. But other than singer Scott Padden's drawl, which sounds like a punked-up version of XTC's Andy Partridge, there's very little to link the Pilot to Gunner of the past to the PTG of the present. The band has given up on the lo-fi rock aesthetic; their return is marked with slickly-produced guitars. PTG are no longer making rock music for art's sake; now they're playing rock music for rock's sake instead.

From the grab-you-by-the-throat guitar lead of the title track to the hand-claps which drive the chorus in "The Product," *Get Saved* proves that PTG is a band that would rather play gigs with the Foo Fighters than hang with the too-cool-for-school NYC indie-rock scene. It would be easy to bitch about how they've sold out, if only the songs weren't so damn irresistible. Hook after hook will guarantee that I'll be keeping this on my CD tray for the rest of 2004. ★★ ★ —STEVEN SANDOR

NEVERTHELESS THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE (METHOD)

The best thing about instrumental music is how incredibly free it makes your mind feel—there's no distracting lyrics to force you to interpret the sounds in one par-



ticular way. And *The Medium Is the Message*, the debut disc from Edmonton's own Nevertheless, sends you on a different trip every time you put it on. Even after you've memorized every quick-paced drumroll or plucky guitar assault, it still takes you somewhere new.

Nevertheless keeps things serious without losing their playful edge. With one foot firmly planted in the frugal simplicity of punk and the other in the technical mastery of metal, Nevertheless have come up with a powerful, original sound. They even convey a valuable message without really saying anything. You just have to look through the medium. ★★ ★ —PHIL DUPERRON

OLD CROW MEDICINE SHOW OLD CROW MEDICINE SHOW (NETTWERK)

It's hard not to be a tad cynical as you crack open this wide-release debut from OCMS. The American quintet is being sold as an all-star group of punks and misfits who've embraced Appalachian folk music; after the surprise success of the *O Brother Where Art Thou?* soundtrack, it's easy to wonder if Appalachian folk will follow the same path as Celtic music, with mediocre band after mediocre band latching onto this hip "new" old sound in an effort to make their tunes sound authentic and warm.

But OCMS show they aren't simply capitalizing on a sound; five of the 11 tracks are old-school folk faves, from "C.C. Rider" to "Poor Man," and the band is solid enough with the fiddles and acoustic guitars to have you imagining that you're listening to a

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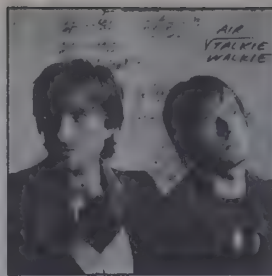
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scratchy mono 78.

So even though the band is being marketed as punks playing folk, there isn't anything on this record that breaks too dramatically with tradition. And when the band performs their original work, they make some obvious nods to folk greats: "Trials and Troubles," which features a nice guest appearance from Gillian Welch, is a bluesy porch song that would go fine with beer and lemonade when the temperature hits 30°C and the humidity is at 99. Wait—this is Edmonton. Okay, you'll have to imagine the hot weather and the porch.... ★★★—STEVEN SANDOR

ALL NIGHT RADIO SPIRIT STEREO FREQUENCY (SUB POP)

It's one of those nights when you're driving somewhere and all you've got is the radio, and soon you've tapped into the strangest place on Earth, where the songs drifting through the

static sound alien yet vaguely familiar, like some kind of retro alternate reality. This is where All Night Radio—ex-Beechwood Sparks members Dave Scher and Jimi Hey—are coming from with *Spirit Stereo Frequency*. With its lilting melodies, booming camp effects, crackling edges and psychedelic arrangements, it's certainly an imaginative production *tour de force*.

"You'll Be on Your Own," for example, rocks out with gentle breaks and reverberating vocals, with a sitar-like guitar riff dancing over top. By the midpoint, the album settles into a restless ennui before swirling into the epic closer, "All Night Radio," which throws everything you've been hearing into a tripped-out sonic hallucination. ★★★—DAVE JOHNSTON

AIR TALKIE WALKIE (VIRGIN/EMI)

Talk about beating a hasty retreat. With

their previous album, *10,000 Hz Legend*, the Parisian electronic duo Air—Jean-Benoît Duncel and Nicolas Godin—branched into psychedelic prog rock and lost a good chunk of their fanbase in the process. It was a rigid, unforgiving experience compared to the ethereal glide of their Virgin debut, *Moon Safari*.

But Air's melodic gifts are back on display with *Talkie Walkie*, and you simply have to look at a song like "Mike Mills" (named after the graphic designer and filmmaker responsible for the group's epochal "Sexy Boy" video) to know they've reinvested their energies into making pretty tunes like they used to. Much of *Talkie Walkie* glides along like a dream. There are faint hints of the rockier *Legend* strung throughout, like the chiming "Surling on a Rocker" and "Alpha Beta Gaga," but there's a greater emphasis on soothing the listener as opposed to engaging him, something Air does very well. ★★★—DAVE JOHNSTON

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QUICK SPINS BY WHITEY AND REGGIE

New Bomb Turks, *Switchblade Tongues*, *Butterknife Brains* (Gearhead)

The New Bombs Turks release a mixed bag of scattershot recordings culled from various sessions over the past five years but it's not as soft upstairs as the title might suggest. Nope! Even though this compilation is not the Turks' best, it's still a weighty dose of fist- and ass-shakin' rock 'n' roll. Sixteen solid tracks, good for rabid fans and the uninitiated alike.

Dub Narcotic Sound System, *Degenerate Introduction* (K)
Pulling themselves from the brink of accessibility, Dub Narcotic unleashes another bevy of fuzzed-out white guy skronk as only Calvin Johnson and company can do. The occasional tunelessness can be forgiven since it's... well... Dub Narcotic. If you're not singing along by the 30-second mark of the hypnotic "You Fuck Me Up," then this probably isn't the skronk you're looking for, loser.

Original Soundtrack, *Win a Date With Tad Hamilton!* (Sony)

In 40 years, they will be building a golf course over thousands of discarded copies of this record.

Brides of Destruction, *Here Come the Brides* (Sanctuary)

Nikki Sixx, Traci Guns and two other metal-type dudes try to reignite the L.A. glam metal scene. The cover art is an airbrushed caricature of the band. Do you think they get the irony? Ah, Nikki, I knew it was all over for you when I saw you with ripped jeans and a wallet chain.

James Last, *Songs for Lovers* (Eagle)

Just in time for Valentine's Day. Mr. Last takes the likes of "Unbreak My Heart," "The Lady in Red" and "My Cherie Amour" and sanitizes them until they're almost unrecognizable. Not bad, not good. Sure to be an elevator staple for years.

CAGE MATCH OF THE WEEK

Robin Hunter and Six Foot Bullies
Your Heart, My Sleeve (Independent)

vs.

Big Head Todd and the Monsters
Crimes of Passion (Big/EMI)

Big Head Todd has a few strikes against him before this tête-à-tête even begins. Is there anything more hackneyed than a CD cover featuring a scantily clad woman wearing fishnets? Is there? No, there is not. Also, calling your record *Crimes of Passion* is so clownishly clichéd that it's hard to read it without smirking. Hunter on the other hand has gone the tasteful route with beautiful cover illustrations from Miss Penny Jo and a titular witticism that portends the album's wistful content. Hunter and company may sound tough, but after a few tracks, it becomes pretty clear that deep down, they're a bunch of softies. An album's worth of country-tinged acoustic tearjerkers punctuated by the occasional shuffler make for a satisfying listen. Todd and the Monsters, meanwhile, match their hack album graphics with some hack faux-blues and white guy R&B full of echoes of Robbie Robertson and the Fabulous Thunderbirds. Todd can pen a tune, but it's all buried under too much cheese to be palatable. **RESULT:** That's a TKO for RH&TSFB.

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MUSIC



classical notes

By ALLISON KYDD

A tiny pianist

Harris Wang • McDougall United Church • Sun, Feb 15 (3pm) Many of you may be aware of young pianist Harris Wang. Back in November 2002, he played to an overflow crowd at a noon-hour concert at Grant MacEwan's Alberta College Campus. Muttart Hall was filled to capacity—latecomers sat in the aisles or were turned away with only the promise of a possible later concert at McDougall Church to comfort them. In the 15 months since then (especially after a high-profile appearance on *The Tonight Show With Jay Leno*), Wang—now eight years old—has been much in demand as a concert artist and has been distinguished by many other awards and honours.

The long-awaited performance at McDougall Church this Sunday is Wang's second solo show. "It's a special concert," says Wang's piano teacher, Miriam Mahood, "because it involves a partnership between the church and the Elsie Cheung Music Academy, and it brings a wide range of people together."

Wang will play all the Bach two-part inventions ("a huge undertaking for any artist," says Mahood), the Bach Concerto in D Minor (a well-known virtuosic piano concerto), the Bercovich Piano Concerto in D (his performance of which made him a finalist in the Canadian Music Competitions last July) and several smaller works.

While many children find performance the most difficult part of studying an instrument, the opportunity to perform makes Wang work harder. The image of a child sitting at the huge grand piano is certainly appealing, yet I can't help wondering what happens

when the picture changes, when his feet can touch the floor. I suspect that child prodigies are extremely vulnerable. I recall how Wang in his earlier concert played his complete program without a break because he was afraid the people might all go away. When I asked him afterwards what he liked best, he replied, "All the people clapping." A short time later, I found him alternately suffering the embraces of his fans and sprawling on his stomach on the floor carefully autographing their programs.

Mahood, however, has her feet firmly planted on the ground. "It can be challenging for the piano teacher to [help the student] balance stardom with long-term educational goals and musical growth and development," she says. "The teacher's job is to bring out the maximum potential in each student, using one or a combination of several different vehicles, such as competitions, concerts, private study, the exam route, et cetera. The ultimate goal is long-term development and a successful career, so the real winner is the long-term winner. Stardom can get out of control."

Wang received considerable media attention all of last year, but so far the youngster seems to be taking it in stride. Apparently, when his mother phoned his school to tell him he would be appearing on *The Tonight Show*, he treated the news as if he were going to McDonald's after school. "It must be hard for an eight-year-old to keep it all in perspective," Mahood says.

Talented as he is, Wang must practice and avoid bad habits. "Young children like to play fast," Mahood says. "Harris, like any child, struggles with the discipline of working things out slowly." In the years she's worked with him, she has seen Wang "become his own little person. He likes mixing with people, has developed some pride and accomplishments, has had an exceptionally nice beginning, but there will be challenges ahead."

On March 22, Harris Wang will also take part in *Edmonton: A City Called Home*, a joint venture of the Cosmopolitan Music Society and the Edmonton 2004 Education Committee, at the Jubilee Auditorium. ☉

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A thin line between love and skates

Murder, sex, revenge and hockey take to the ice in *Cowards Bend the Knee*

BY PAUL MATWYCHUK

I can't decide on my favourite moment from Guy Maddin's silent melodrama *Cowards Bend the Knee*. Maybe it's the scene where the character named Guy Maddin (Darcy Fehr)—the star rover for the Winnipeg Maroons hockey squad—takes his girlfriend Veronica to an abortion clinic located in the back room of a business that an intertitle informs us operates as a "beauty salon by day, bordello by night!" Maybe it's the moment a few seconds later when Meta (Melissa Dionisio), the madam's beautiful daughter, strolls into the operating room, licking sugar off her fingers—Guy looks up from the operating table that Veronica's been strapped to, locks eyes with Meta... and promptly runs out of the clinic with her, leaving Veronica to suffer through her abortion on her own! Or maybe it's the moment in the middle of Guy and Meta's first lovemaking session when Meta pulls out a comb and practically brings Guy to orgasm by running it through his hair.

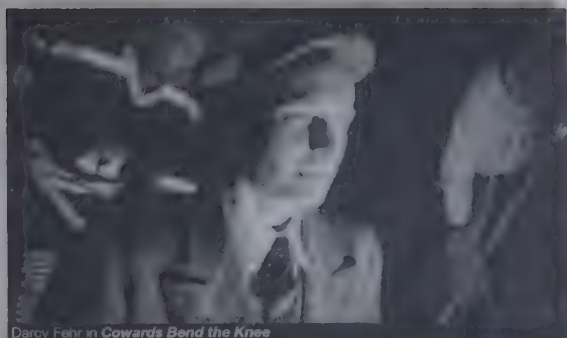
Or maybe it's any of the dozens of other bizarre, hilarious and utterly per-

verse images and plot twists that Maddin has stuffed into this hour-long film, a delirious blend of soap opera, ghost story, revenge epic, silent melodrama and stag film, all set against the backdrop of Depression-era small-town hockey. (In the opening scene, the character "Guy Maddin" receives two headknocks during a single hockey game, and the entire film seems to have been written by someone still recovering from a powerful concussion.) *Cowards Bend the Knee* was originally conceived as an art gallery installation: viewers were supposed to kneel on the floor and watch the film's 10 six-minute "chapters" (bearing lurid titles like "Sperm Players" and "Another Wax Tryst") through a series of small peepholes in the wall. It's perhaps the most uncomfortable moviegoing experience imaginable (although squeezing yourself into those cramped seats in the Princess II comes awfully close), but Maddin wanted to give audiences the feeling that they were watching something furtive and forbidden, like the grainy black-and-white nudie reels they used to show in the back rooms of seedy nickelodeons.

Cowards is the most sexually explicit film Maddin has ever made—there's abundant male and female nudity, incest, fetishism and even a chapter titled "Fisty"—but the most pornographic thing about it is the relentless, masochistic way he portrays "Guy Maddin" as a weakling, a coward, a worm who betrays or fails

every single woman in his life. (Veronica dies soon after Guy runs out on her and returns to town as a ghost. This apparently happens all the time in Winnipeg, since the ghost quickly lands a job working alongside Guy at the beauty salon. In fact, the ghost turns out to be a better employee than Guy—she gets promoted while Guy is permitted, humiliatingly, to work only on babies.)

THE FULL PLOT of the movie is even more ludicrous than it probably sounds already—I haven't even mentioned Meta's plan to seduce Guy into murdering her mother and her lover (the Winnipeg police chief and one of Guy's hockey teammates) by tricking



Darcy Fehr in *Cowards Bend the Knee*

him into thinking that her murderous father's hands have been transplanted onto the ends of his arms. But as anyone who's seen *Careful*, *Archangel* or *Tales From the Gimli Hospital* knows, ludicrous plotting is a Maddin signature. What makes *Cowards Bend the Knee* special—and arguably Maddin's best film yet—is the way that this time out, all these crazy images seem to be coming from a much more per-

sonal, painful source. It's not just that Maddin has named his pathetic hero after himself; it's the inescapable feeling you get from the film's confessional tone that the character's failings are Maddin's failings too. (Apparently plenty of other touches are autobiographical—Maddin's mother worked in a beauty salon, his

SEE NEXT PAGE

REVUE INDIE

Fuhgeddaboutit

Adam Sandler forgets everything he ever knew about comedy in *50 First Dates*

BY BRIAN GIBSON

With *50 First Dates*, it's now clear that Adam Sandler films are to comedy what Halley's Comet is to the earth—there's a funny one about every 75 go-rounds.

For the briefest of instants, somewhere amid the black void of *Happy Gilmore*, *The Waterboy* and *Eight Crazy Nights*, Sandler's shooting streak of hilarity came and went with P.T. Anderson's critically praised and popularly ignored *Punch-Drunk Love*. Given the box-office success of the recent *Anger Management*, though, it seems that lots of people prefer to see Sandler mug for the camera in misogynist comedies

obsessed with penis length, bashing sexually ambiguous people and letting stunted, dopey males snare his ditzy dream babe. *50 First Dates* offers the same formula, with a schmaltzier aftertaste.

Sandler reteams with *Anger Management* director Peter Segal here, and the pair are soon off and running with a lazy, offensive gagfest. Henry Roth (Sandler), a Hawaii aquarium manager and veterinarian, beds visiting bimbos the night before they return to the mainland; he lies and leaves quickly the next morning.

(These women are not only stupid enough to believe his stories about being a secret agent and his "Harry Testicle" aliases, but at least one is desperate enough to sleep with him even after he 'fesses up to her. Hey, all you sociopathic Average Joe Jackasses out there, there's more hope for you than just making out with a hot chick on a Fox reality show.)

SEE NEXT PAGE

REVUE COMEDY

13
reasons to see...

Cowards Bend the Knee

Continued from previous page

father died when Maddin was still a boy and he used to spend a whole lot of time at the local ice rink.)

As well, Maddin's ability to evoke the filmmaking style of an earlier era has never been sharper; with its milky cinematography, tinny score and hammy performances by all the actors, *Cowards* looks as though it's been mouldering in a film can in

some obscure Vienna archive ever since 1924. (Maddin's fast-paced, jagged editing style is what makes it seem modern.) Outrageous, hilarious, inexplicable, *Cowards Bend the Knee* is one of the most exhilarating moviegoing experiences you'll have all year. So what are you afraid of? ●

COWARDS BEND THE KNEE

Written and directed by Guy Maddin • Starring Darcy Fehr and Melissa Dionisio • Zeidler Hall, The Citadel • Fri-Mon, Feb 13-16 (9pm) • Metro Cinema • 425-9212

FILM

Fading into oblivion

Barbershop 2 has a shaggy screenplay but razor-sharp comic acting

By JOSEF BRAUN

Though overlong, undernourished and suffering from a pretty hopeless case of sequelitis, *Barbershop 2: Back in Business* is precisely the sort of movie that's not very good yet also difficult to dislike. Tim Story and Mark Brown, the director and primary writer from the original *Barbershop*, that warm, largely charming and effortlessly political crossover hit from 2002, are both absent this time out and their replacements seem content to aimlessly pile on narrative without any real development or cohesion. Yet it still features one of the most likable and talented comic ensembles in recent memory, and you could do worse than spend a couple of hours with them. Like a TV situation comedy, *Barbershop 2* makes up in cast chemistry and audience familiarity what it lacks in strong writing and freshness. Unfortunately, it's a hell of a lot longer than an episode *Good Times*.

Barbershop was basically about how Calvin (the subtle, cute and always watchable Ice Cube) comes to realize that the Chicago South Side barbershop he inherited from his father is really a lot more than just some old familial burden: Calvin's barbershop is a very important place not only because black men apparently need frequent haircuts, but because it's where people (often, but not exclusively, black people) can gather and feel a sense of community and history, say what's on their mind and pass the time in good company. Well, *Barbershop 2* offers much the same lesson, but instead of teaching it to Calvin, it's trying to teach it directly to us. Problem is, we're already convinced.



Cube/TM Entertainer and Ice Cube in *Barbershop 2: Back in Business*

A couple of years ago an enormous Shoppers Drug Mart opened up across the street from the terrific old Telestar Drug store in Calgary where I grew up. It was a real scumbag thing to do, but at least for now, Telestar is still hanging in there, its revolving rooftop rocket emblazoned with the word DRUG still shining in the night. I relay this



memory because we all have our own stories like it, the squeezing out of small business and community solidarity by obnoxious gargantuan franchises (one need look no further than Whyte Avenue for countless examples). In the case of *Barbershop 2*, it's a giant Nappy Cutz that's opening across the street, a chain of tacky, monstrous salons especially for black hair. The community, with Calvin at the helm, fights Nappy Cutz and the other franchises that are to accompany it, but the one-dimensional, e-e-evil developers have their hands in the pockets of the e-e-evil local government and they get the go-ahead anyway.

Barbershop 2 takes its sweet time

and brother elaborately maintain her amnesiac delusion.)

SOON ENOUGH, then, we graduate from vomit and profanity to the cartoonish, puerile humour of Sandlerian romantic comedy. Walruses, we're told, have very "big winkies," it's not clear if Alexa prefers "taco" or "sausage," and Henry, after increasingly silly attempts to date his daily forget-me-not, followed by countless first kisses, wants to cop a "feelski" of Lucy's "boobies." (Apparently, writer Charles Wing missed sex ed in high school.)

It doesn't help that Lucy's character is a rip-off of Ellen Degeneres's Dory character from *Finding Nemo*, or that Dory was far more colourful and lifelike. Barrymore's acting here is stiffer than an embalmed corpse—all the actress has to do is look angelic and act genuinely surprised with

getting this central story going, severely weighing itself down with a host of dumb flashbacks and amorous subplots along the way. When the film finally ends, only a few hours into Nappy Cutz's first day of business, the optimism is utterly ridiculous. The story really needs to begin where it ends if it wants to find any genuine sense of resolution. (And if you want to watch a movie that covers the same territory with far more thoughtfulness, I'd recommend John Sayles's *Sunshine State*.)

Nevertheless, I still walked out of *Barbershop 2* with a smile on my face. It's just that my favourite bits—like sexy Eve playing against her attraction to rough Ricky, or Queen Latifah's sassy cameo as the neighbouring beauty parlour owner, or Cedric the Entertainer lecturing a guy on the train about lactose fats or his outrageous comments about how the D.C. sniper is "the Jackie Robinson of crime"—make a better greatest-hits package than a movie. ●

BARBERSHOP 2: BACK IN BUSINESS

Directed by Kevin Rodney Sullivan • Written by Don D. Scott • Starring Ice Cube, Cedric the Entertainer and Eve • Now playing

every daily revelation, but the wooden starlet can't make things seem new to her. But among Schneider's pot-bellied clowning and Dan Aykroyd's brainless turn as a neurologist, Sean Astin stands out as Doug, Lucy's lisping, steroid-taking brother who wears '80s bicycle shorts and black-netting tanktops. In a film with a forgettable script and a soundtrack full of ska-pap versions of classic Police and Cure tunes that relies on cultural amnesia for its appeal, I'm hoping that Astin's relatively nuanced and funny performance will remain in my mind after I concuss myself in hopes of forgetting this cheap, slumming comedy. ●

30 FIRST DATES

Directed by Peter Segal • Written by Charles Wing • Starring Adam Sandler, Drew Barrymore and Rob Schneider • Opens Fri, Feb 13

www.odeonfilms.com

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"THE MOST JOYOUSLY CINEMATIC MOVIE I'VE SEEN THIS YEAR!"
Peter Rainer, NEW YORK MAGAZINE

THE TRIPLETS OF BELLEVILLE
A Film by Sylvain Chomet

EXCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT NOW PLAYING! PRINCESS

ODEON FILMS

Diverting power from the Shields

Canadian cinema suffers another setback with tiresome *Republic of Love*

BY BRIAN GIBSON

Canada, we stand on guard for yet another quirky comic drama to sweep across the barren theatres of our home and native land. Barren not just because Canadians have always preferred to flock to the latest Hollywood flick instead of homegrown product, but because as much patriot love as we're commanded to show, we can't fake it for our substandard feature films—the glow in Canuck cinephiles' hearts fades. And please, for our country's sake, let's keep our neighbours' screens gloriously free of movies like *The Republic of Love* (adapted from the novel by the late Carol Shields), where Canadians are portrayed as superficially kooky oddballs who, deep down, are as dull as Stephen Harper on Valium.

Tom Avery (Bruce Greenwood) was raised as a practice baby by dozens of would-be "perfect homemakers" in an etiquette class. Now he's a thrice-divorced host of a late-night radio

show for lonely hearts in Toronto, while the only woman in his life is his mother (Jackie Burroughs). Tom's soon-to-be soulmate, Fay (Emilia Fox), is a folklorist who studies mermaids; her greatest burdens are having parents (Edward Fox and Martha Henry) who seem to be perfectly married, and her recent breakup with a man she realized she didn't love enough to let

scene in which Tom beds a woman with a foot fetish might be forgivable if the romantic plot weren't so full of empty truisms ("I was smothered with our love, I guess.... I just couldn't breathe") and nonsense lines that would stump a Zen monk ("Geography is destiny").

DIRECTOR DEEPA MEHTA and cinematographer Douglas Koch seem to have spent most of their time making Toronto (the book was set in Winnipeg) look as clean and bland as possible. There's a burnished sheen to all the interior shots of pedways and glass buildings, and the shots in subway cars make the TTC seem like a fast, cool, luxury ride. From its lustrous apartments to the slick cityscapes, *The Republic of Love*



looks like a series of Ikea and TD commercials directed by David Fincher. Plus, the utterly inappropriate music for this pseudo-1950s WASP rom-com is an Indian electronic score by Talvin Singh.

Why the muddled mix of form, tone, content, music and setting? My fellow Canadians, ours is not to reason why, but to puzzle our heads

at the continued sorry state of cinematic affairs in this nation of ours. And don't forget your patriotic duty: boycott *The Republic of Love*. ●

THE REPUBLIC OF LOVE

Directed by Deepa Mehta • Written by Esta Spalding and Deepa Mehta • Starring Bruce Greenwood and Emilia Fox • Opens Fri, Feb 13



him move in with her. (Whoops—did I mention that Tom and Fay live in the same apartment building, and two of Tom's ex-wives are Fay's friends, but the two have somehow not met? By Dickens, what a shockingly pointless series of coincidences in a city of three million.)

Throw in a pet duck for Fay's father, a mustachioed French hotel clerk who seems to have wandered into the film from *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* and Tom's hometown, Duck River (the most bogus name ever for a Canadian burg?), a place full of trailer homes and old people who all go to the Saturday Night Latin Dance at the local hall.... Yep, I think the quirk quota's been filled.

Such tiresome zaniness and Seinfeldian conceits like the amusing sex

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NEW THIS WEEK

The Animation Show (M) *Beavis and Butt-head* creator Mike Judge and Oscar-winning director Don Hertzfeld curate this lively, unpredictable collection of 12 international animated shorts, six of which were nominated for Academy Awards. *Zeidler Hall, The Citadel; Fri-Mon, Feb 13-16 (7pm)*

Cowards Bend the Knee (M) Darcy Fehr and Melissa Dionisio star in *Core-ful*/writer/director Guy Maddin's bizarre silent potboiler about a Winnipeg hockey player who is seduced into a web of intrigue by the beautiful daughter of the owner of a combination beauty salon, bordello and abortion clinic. *Zeidler Hall, The Citadel; Fri-Mon, Feb 13-16 (9pm)*

FAVA Doc Class Screening (M) A program of 14 new short documentaries by FAVA members produced under the guidance of Gil Cardinal and Lorna Thomas. *Zeidler Hall, The Citadel; Thu, Feb 12 (7pm)*

50 First Dates (CO, FP) Adam Sandler, Drew Barrymore, Sean Astin and Rob Schneider star in *Anger Management* director Peter Segal's romantic comedy about a veterinarian who attempts to have a relationship with a girl whose short-term memory loss means he has to get her to fall in love with him every single time they meet

The Gospel of John (CO, FP) Henry Ian Cusick, Lynsey Baxter and Stuart Bunce star in *Metroland* director Philip Saville's Biblical epic, a self-proclaimed "word-for-word" adaptation of the Gospel According to John, focussing on Christ's final hours, his crucifixion and resurrection

The Republic of Love (P) Bruce Greenwood, Emilia Fox, Edward Fox and Martha Henry star in *Bollywood/Hollywood* director Deepa Mehta's film version of Carol Shields's novel about the relationship between an off-chorded radio host and a woman whose parents' seemingly rock-solid marriage has caused her to hold her lovers to impossibly high expectations

The Searchers (RFS) John Wayne, Natalie Wood and Henry Fonda star in *Stagecoach* director John Ford's seminal 1956 Western. *Metroland* director Philip Saville's *Metroland* is a year quest to find the man after she is abducted by Indians. *Metroland Museum Auditorium (102 Ave & 128 St) Mon-Sat, Feb 13-16 (7pm)*

FIRST-RUN MOVIES

Along Came Polly (R) Ben Stiller, Cameron Diaz, Peter Onorati and John Hamour's *Along Came Polly* is a comedy about a man who is afraid of taking risks. *Metroland Museum Auditorium (102 Ave & 128 St) Mon-Sat, Feb 13-16 (7pm)*

Barbershop 2: Back in Business (CO, FP) Ice Cube, Cedric the Entertainer, Sean Patrick Thomas and Queen Latifah star in *How Stella Got Her Groove Back* director Kevin Rodney Sullivan's sequel to the hit 2002 comedy, in which Calvin Palmer's independent haircutting business struggles to compete against a ruthless name-brand barbershop chain.

The Big Bounce (FP) Owen Wilson, Morgan Freeman, Gary Sinise and Sara Foster star in *Miami Blues* director George Armitage's comic crime movie about a laconic Hawaiian drifter who is seduced by a beautiful woman into stealing a fortune from her lover, a corrupt real estate tycoon. Based on the novel by Elmore Leonard.

Big Fish (CO, FP) Ewan McGregor, Albert Finney, Billy Crudup, Jessica Lange and Helena Bonham-Carter star in *Batman* director Tim Burton's whimsical fantasy about a dying man whose habit of spinning tall tales about his wild adventures as a travelling salesman has always infuriated his hard-headed son. Based on the novel by Daniel Wallace.

The Butterfly Effect (CO, FP) Ashton Kutcher, Amy Smart and Ethan Phillips star in *Writer/Directors* Eric Bress and J. Mackye Gruber's sci-fi mindbender about a young man who figures out how to travel back in time to his childhood, and who must return to the past over and over again to repair the disastrous effects his voyages have on his future reality

Calendar Girls (P) Helen Mirren and Julie Walters star in *Saving Grace* director Nigel Cole's fish-out-of-clothing comedy, based on a true story, about a group of British women who doff their duds for a calendar and a good cause.

Catch That Kid (CO, FP) Kristen Stewart, Corbin Bleu, Jennifer Beals and Sarah Roberts star in *World Traveler* director Bart Freundlich's kiddie adventure movie about a 12-year-old climbing enthusiast whose mountaineering skills come in handy when she hatches a wild scheme to finance an operation for her paralyzed father by robbing a high-tech bank

Cheaper by the Dozen (CO, FP) Steve Martin, Bonnie Hunt, Hilary Duff and Piper Perabo star in *Big Fat Liar* director Shawn Levy's domestic comedy about a spectacularly fertile small-town football coach with 12 children whose home life becomes even more chaotic than usual when he takes a job at Chicago's Northwestern University

Cold Mountain (CO, FP) Jude Law, Nicole Kidman, Renée Zellweger, Kathy Baker, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Natalie Portman star in *The English Patient* director Anthony Minghella's epic love film version of Charles Frazier's novel about a Civil War deserter and his trek back home to the bride he left behind in North Carolina

Ginger Snaps II: Unleashed (FP) Emily Perkins and Tatiana Maslany star in director

Brett Sullivan's sequel to the 2001 feminist horror film, in which high school outcast Brigitte Fitzgerald is confined to a rehab clinic, where she must deal with her guilt over killing her lycanthropic sister as well as her own impending metamorphosis into a werewolf.

Girl With a Pearl Earring (CO) Scarlett Johansson, Colin Firth and Tom Wilkinson star in director Peter Webber's somber period film, set in 17th-century Holland, about a young woman who is hired on as a servant in the home of Johannes Vermeer and winds up inspiring one of the master painter's greatest portraits.

The Last Samurai (CO, FP) Tom Cruise and Ken Watanabe star in *Glory* director Edward Zwick's historical epic about an alcoholic Civil War veteran who travels to Japan to train and modernize the emperor's troops, but decides to switch sides after being exposed to the honour code of the samurai warriors the emperor is determined to wipe out.

The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (CO, FP) Elijah Wood, Ian McKellen, Viggo Mortensen and Liv Ullmann star in the long-awaited concluding chapter of director Peter Jackson's epic film adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's trilogy of fantasy novels about a band of hobbits, trolls, elves, wizards and humans who embark on a quest to destroy an evil, all-powerful ring.

Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World (CO) Russell Crowe and Paul Bettany star in *Witness* director Peter Weir's waterlogged adventure yarn, based on the novels of Patrick O'Brian, in which 19th-century British sea captain Jack Aubrey and ship surgeon Stephen Maturin brave storms and cannon-fire as they pursue a French "super-frigate" from Cape Horn to the Galapagos Islands.

Miracle (CO, FP) Kurt Russell, Patricia Clarkson and Noah Emmerich star in *Tumbleweeds* director Gavin O'Connor's inspirational sports picture about Herb Brooks, the coach who led the U.S. hockey team to a memorable upset victory over the Soviets at the 1980 Winter Olympics.

Mona Lisa Smile (FP) Julia Roberts, Julia Stiles, Kirsten Dunst and Maggie Gyllenhaal star in *Four Weddings and a Funeral* director Mike Newell's drama, set in 1953 at Wellesley women's college, about a rebellious teacher who makes it her mission to ensure her students aspire to be more than socialites, hostesses and housewives.

Monster (CO, FP, GA) Charlize Theron and Christina Ricci star in *Writer/Director* Patty Jenkins's sympathetic biopic about Aileen Wuornos, the troubled woman who in the '80s became known as "America's first female serial killer," and her needy relationship with her emotionally stunted lesbian lover.

Mystic River (CO, FP) Sean Penn, Kevin Bacon and Tim Robbins star in *Unforgiven* director Clint Eastwood's



Talk about goodness. The *Passion of the Christ* has beaten Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* at the box office. And whereas gun-jumping pundits everywhere have been quick to label the movie as a biased, supposedly anti-Semitic spin, it puts on Christ's last days, the makers of *The Gospel of John* are billing their film as the most faithful Jesus flick ever made, with a script based "word for word" on the Gospel According to John—or at least, the version of the gospel that appears in the American Bible Society's *Good News Bible*. "We couldn't change a single word, not even a preposition," director Philip Saville says in the film's press notes. "Many times I wrote down words that were in the Bible and I was told they were not in the Bible." Unconfirmed reports state that God refused a screenwriting credit on the film in exchange for points and 10 per cent of the gross.

moody drama, set in working-class Boston, about three childhood friends whose traumatic memories of the past are revived when one, now a police detective, begins to suspect another of killing the third's daughter. Based on the novel by Dennis Lehane.

The Perfect Score (CO, FP) Scarlett Johansson, Erika Christensen and Chris Evans star in *Varsity Blues* director Brian Robison's teen comedy about a group of high school students who hatch a scheme to get perfect scores on their SATs by stealing the answers from the Princeton Testing Center.

Something's Gotta Give (CO) Jack Nicholson, Diane Keaton, Keanu Reeves and Amanda Peet star in *What Women Want* director Nancy Meyers's romantic comedy about a middle-aged rascal who re-evaluates his lifelong preference for dating much younger women when he finds himself falling in love with the middle-aged mother of his latest trophy girlfriend.

Teacher's Pet (FP) The voices of Nathan Lane, Shaun Fleming, Kelsey Grammer and Megan Mullally are featured in this big-screen version of the animated TV series about a superintelligent dog who accompanies his master to school in order to learn more about the world.

The Triplets of Belleville (P) *Writer/director* Sylvain Chomet's unique, nearly wordless animated feature about a clubfooted old woman who enlists the aid of a 1930s vocal trio to rescue her son, a champion cyclist who has been kidnapped by a gang

of sinister hoodlums.

21 Grams (CO) Sean Penn, Naomi Watts, Benicio Del Toro and Melissa Leo star in *Amores Perros* director Alejandro González Iñárritu's intense, chronologically scrambled drama about three people whose lives are bound together by a sudden, inexplicable tragedy.

Win a Date With Tad Hamilton! (CO) Kate Bosworth, Josh Duhamel and Topher Grace star in *Legally Blonde* director George Luke's teen comedy about the romantic triangle that arises between a vain Hollywood idol, the small-town checkout girl who meets him through a "win a date" contest and her best friend, who's always had a secret crush on her.

You Got Served (CO, FP) Marques Houston, Steve Harvey and the band B2K star in director Christopher B. Stokes's hip-hop comedy about a pair of friends who must win a street dance competition in order to finance their dream of opening their very own recording studio.

LEGEND

CO: Cineplex Odeon, 444-5468
EFS: Edmonton Film Society, 439-5285
FP: Famous Players
GA: Garneau Theatre, 433-0728
L: Leduc Cinema, 986-2728
M: Metro Cinema, 425-9212
P: Princess Theatre, 433-0728

GARNEAU theatre
476-8000 • 433-0728

MONSTER
Nightly 7:00 & 9:15 pm
Sat Sun & Mon Matinee 2:00 pm
18A (sexual violence, coarse language)

PRINCESS THEATRE
1937 - Whyte Ave. - 433-0728

THE REPUBLIC OF LOVE
Nightly 7:00 & 9:00 pm
Sat Sun & Mon Matinee 2:30 pm
14A (sexual content)

PRINCESS THEATRE
1937 - Whyte Ave. - 433-0728

THE TRIPLETS OF BELLEVILLE
Nightly 7:10 & 9:10 pm
Sat Sun & Mon Matinee 2:00 pm
PG

Rake
with guests
Portal and Superseed
Saturday, February 14

6:30pm
7:30pm
8:30pm
www.rakeprok.com

FILM LISTINGS

Showtimes for Friday, February 12 to Thursday, February 19

All showtimes are subject to change at any time. Please contact theatre for confirmation.

GARNEAU
1172-109 Ave. 433-0788

MONSTER 18A
Sexual violence, coarse language. Daily 7:00 9:15
Sat Sun Mon 2:00

PRINCESS
10037-52 Ave. 433-0788

THE TRIPLETS OF BELLEVILLE PG
Daily 7:10 9:10 Sat Sun Mon 2:00

THE REPUBLIC OF LOVE 14A
Sexual content. Daily 7:00 9:00 Sat Sun 2:30

METRO CINEMA
9828-101A Ave.
Cineplex Theatre 425-9212

THE ANIMATION SHOW 14A
Fri-Mon 7:00

COWARDS BEND THE KNEE 5TC
Fri-Mon 9:00

CHUNK/SWEETIE 5TC
Thu 7:00

GRANDIN THEATRE
Grandin Mall, St. Winston Churchill Ave.
91, 910-100-1000

THE RETURN OF THE KING 14A
Violence, frightening scenes. Daily 1:30 7:10

PETER PAN PG
Daily 12:45 3:10

ALONG CAME POLLY PG
Crude content. Daily 7:15 9:15

THE PERFECT SCORE PG
Coarse language. Daily 7:00 9:00

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN G
Daily 1:00 3:30

CATCH THAT KID G
Daily 1:15 3:15 7:30 9:30

50 FIRST DATES PG
Crude content. Daily 1:15 3:15 7:30 9:30

LEDUC CINEMAS
1172-109 Ave. 433-0788

The showtimes listed are for the date of this issue, Thu, February 12 only. Please contact the theatre for showtimes.

CATCH THAT KID G
Thu 7:10 9:10

ALONG CAME POLLY PG
Crude content. Thu 7:05 9:10

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT 18A
Disturbing content, violence. Thu 7:20 9:30

BIG FISH PG
Not recommended for young children. Thu

WETASKIWIN CINEMAS
(1) 780-352-3922

The showtimes listed are for the date of this issue, Thu, February 12 only. Please contact the theatre for showtimes.

MIRACLE G
Thu 6:50 9:30

CATCH THAT KID G
Thu 1:15 3:20

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT 18A
Disturbing content, violence. Thu 1:20 3:30

BIG FISH PG
Not recommended for young children. Thu 1:10 3:40

CINEPLEX ODEON CINEMAS
National cinema
CINEMA GUIDE

CITY CENTRE
10200-102 Ave. 421-7020

ALONG CAME POLLY PG
Crude content. Daily 1:10 4:40 7:30 10:20

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 14A
Violence, frightening scenes. Daily 8:45

BIG FISH
Not recommended for young children. Daily 1:30 4:20 7:20 10:10

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT
Disturbing content, violence. Daily 1:20 4:10 7:40 10:15

MASTER AND COMMANDER: THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD
Violence. Daily 12:20 3:15 6:30 9:35

CATCH THAT KID
Daily 1:40 4:00 6:35

21 GRAMS
Fri-Tue 12:40 3:20 6:40 10:00
Wed 12:40 3:20 10:00

GIRL WITH A PEARL EARRING
Daily 12:50 3:50 7:10 9:40

MYSTIC RIVER
Coarse language. Daily 12:30 3:30 6:50 9:50

50 FIRST DATES PG
Crude content. No passes. Daily 1:00 3:40 7:00 9:30

WEST MALL 8
10037-52 Ave. 433-0788

LOST IN TRANSLATION 14A
Fri-Tue 7:20 9:40 Sat-Mon 2:20 4:40 7:20 9:40

HOUSE OF SAND AND FOG 14A
Disturbing content. Fri-Tue 7:45 Sat-Mon 4:10 6:45

LOVE ACTUALLY
Sexual content. Fri-Tue 7:45 9:30 9:10 Sat-Mon 2:30 6:30 9:10

PETER PAN PG
Fri-Tue 7:45 9:30 Sat-Sun 1:35 4:15 6:35 9:00

CHASING LIBERTY PG
Fri-Tue 7:10 9:35 Sat-Mon 1:50 4:20 7:10 9:35

PAYCHECK PG
Violence. Fri-Tue 7:45 9:15 Sat-Mon 1:40 4:15 6:50 9:15

CITY OF GOD 18A
Violence, coarse language throughout. Fri-Tue 7:45 Sat-Mon 1:30 9:20

THE COOLER 18A
Sexual content, violence. Fri-Tue 7:45 9:30 Sat-Mon 1:40 4:30 7:00 9:30

THE PERFECT SCORE PG
Coarse language. Fri-Tue 7:45 9:30 Sat-Mon 2:00 4:25 6:40 8:50

CLAREVIEW
4211-139 Ave. 472-7600

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 14A
Violence, frightening scenes. Fri-Mon 12:50 4:50 8:50 Tue-Thu 4:50 8:50

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN G
Fri-Mon 1:20 3:40 Tue-Thu 3:40

COLD MOUNTAIN 18A
Daily 9:00

ALONG CAME POLLY PG
Crude content. Fri-Mon 1:00 3:00 5:10 7:30 9:55 Tue-Thu 3:00 5:10 7:30 9:55

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT 18A
Disturbing content, violence. Fri-Mon 12:40 3:10 7:00 9:30 Tue-Thu 3:10 7:00 9:30

WIN A DATE WITH TAD HAMILTON! PG
Daily 7:40 10:00

THE PERFECT SCORE PG
Coarse language. Fri-Mon 1:50 4:10 6:50 Tue-Thu 4:10 6:50

CATCH THAT KID G
Fri-Mon 12:45 2:50 5:00 7:10 9:20 Tue-Thu 2:50 5:00 7:10 9:20

BARBERSHOP 2: BACK IN BUSINESS PG
Coarse language. Fri-Mon 1:30 3:50 6:40 9:10 Tue-Thu 3:50 6:40 9:10

MIRACLE G
Fri-Mon 12:30 3:20 6:45 9:50 Tue-Thu 3:20 6:45 9:50

50 FIRST DATES PG
Crude content. No passes. Fri-Mon 1:10 1:40 3:30 4:00 7:20 7:50 9:40 10:10 Tue-Thu 3:30 4:00 7:20 7:50 9:40 10:10

SOUTH EDMONTON COMMON
10037-52 Ave. 433-0788

THE LAST SAMURAI 14A
Gory scenes. Daily 1:20 5:10 8:40

SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE PG
Coarse language, sexual content. Daily 12:40 3:30 6:40 9:30

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 14A
Violence, frightening scenes. Daily 12:00 4:00 8:15

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN PG
Daily 1:00 3:40

BIG FISH 18A
Not recommended for young children. Daily 12:50 3:50 6:50 9:40

ALONG CAME POLLY PG
Crude content. Daily 1:10 4:10 7:10 9:20

WIN A DATE WITH TAD HAMILTON! 14A
Daily 12:20 2:40 4:50 7:40 10:15

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT G
Disturbing content, violence. Daily 2:00 5:20 8:00 10:40

MONSTER 18A
Sexual violence, coarse language. Daily 1:50 4:40 7:20 10:10

YOU GOT SERVED PG
Fri-Wed 12:15 3:00 5:30 7:45 10:30 Thu 12:15 3:00 10:30

MASTER AND COMMANDER: THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD PG
Violence. Fri-Thu 6:30 9:45

MIRACLE PG
Daily 12:45 3:45 7:00 9:50

CATCH THAT KID PG
Fri-Sat Mon-Thu 12:10 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:10 Sun 12:10 2:15 4:30 9:10

BARBERSHOP 2: BACK IN BUSINESS PG
Coarse language. Daily 1:40 4:20 7:50 10:20

50 FIRST DATES PG
Crude content. No passes. Daily 12:30 1:30 2:30 3:15 4:15 5:00 5:45 6:30 7:30 8:30 9:00 10:00 10:45 Star and Strikers Screening. Thu 10am

WELCOME TO MOOSEPORT PG
No passes. Sneak preview. Sun 7:00

WEST MALL 6
8882-170 St. 444-1331

BROTHER BEAR 18A
Sat-Mon 1:40 3:45

THE SCHOOL OF ROCK PG
Daily 6:40 9:00

LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION 18A
Sat-Mon 2:15 4:35

THE MISSING PG
Violence. Daily 6:30 9:10

DR. SEUSS' THE CAT IN THE HAT PG
Sat-Mon 1:50 4:15

HONEY PG
Daily 7:15 9:40

GOTHIKA 14A
Violence, disturbing content. Fri-Tue 7:30 9:50 Sat-Mon 2:30 4:45 7:30 9:50

MONA LISA SMILE PG
Fri-Tue 6:50 9:30 Sat-Mon 1:30 4:00 6:50 9:30

THE HAUNTED MANSION PG
Frightening scenes. Fri-Tue 7:00 9:20 Sat-Mon 2:00 4:30 7:00 9:20

GALAXY CINEMAS @ SHERWOOD PARK
2020 Sherwood Drive.
435-2100

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 14A
Violence, frightening scenes. Fri 4:15 8:30 Sat-Mon 12:00 4:15 8:30 Tue-Thu 8:30

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN G
Fri-Tue 6:55 Sat-Mon 1:15 6:55 Sun 1:15

COLD MOUNTAIN 18A
Fri 3:10 8:30 9:45 Sat-Mon 12:05 3:10 6:30 9:45 Tue-Thu 6:30 9:45

ALONG CAME POLLY PG
Crude content. Fri 3:40 7:15 9:40 Sat-Mon 12:40 3:40 7:15 9:40 Tue-Thu 7:15 9:40

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT 14A
Disturbing content, violence. Fri 4:30 7:00 9:35 Sat-Mon 1:30 4:30 7:00 9:35 Tue-Thu 7:00 9:35

THE PERFECT SCORE PG
Coarse language. Fri-Sat Mon 4:05 9:10 Sun 9:55 Tue-Thu 9:10

CATCH THAT KID PG
Fri 3:45 6:40 9:00 Sat-Mon 12:45 3:45 6:40 9:00 Tue-Thu 6:40 9:00

MIRACLE PG
Fri 3:30 6:45 9:50 Sat-Mon 12:30 3:30 6:45 9:50 Tue-Thu 6:45 9:50

50 FIRST DATES PG
Crude content. No passes. Fri 3:15 4:00 6:50 7:30 9:15 9:55 Sat-Mon 12:15 1:35 3:15 4:00 6:50 7:30 9:15 Tue-Thu 6:50 7:30 9:15 9:55

MONSTER 18A
Sexual violence, coarse language. Fri 3:50 7:10 10:00 Sat-Mon 12:50 3:50 7:10 10:00 Tue-Thu 7:10 10:00

WWE: NO WAY OUT PG
Classification not available. Sun 5:00

NORTH EDMONTON CINEMAS
14231-137 Ave. 732-2226

THE LAST SAMURAI PG
Gory violence. Daily 8:45

SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE PG
Coarse language, sexual content. Daily 1:10 3:50 6:50 9:40

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 18A
Violence, frightening scenes. Daily 3:10 7:30

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN PG
Daily 12:20 2:30 4:40

COLD MOUNTAIN PG
Daily 12:00 3:20 6:40 9:50

BIG FISH 14A
Not recommended for young children. Daily 1:30 4:20 7:20 10:00

ALONG CAME POLLY G
Crude content. Daily 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:50 10:05

WIN A DATE WITH TAD HAMILTON! G
Daily 12:45

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT PG
Disturbing content, violence. Daily 1:50 4:50 7:45 10:25

MIRACLE PG
Daily 12:50 4:00 7:00 9:55

BARBERSHOP 2: BACK IN BUSINESS PG
Coarse language. Daily 8:00 10:20

50 FIRST DATES PG
Crude content. No passes. Fri-Sat Sun-Tue 12:20 1:20 2:20 3:30 4:30 5:30 6:30 8:10 9:30 10:30 11:20 12:20 1:20 2:20 3:30 4:30 5:30 6:30 8:10 9:30 10:30

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN PG
Violence. Daily 2:10 7:05

CATCH THAT KID PG
Daily 12:30 2:45 5:00 7:15 9:20

MONSTER G
Sexual violence, coarse language. Daily 1:00 3:40 7:40 10:10

CATCH THAT KID 14A
Daily 12:30 2:45 5:00 7:25 9:30

MONSTER PG
Sexual violence, coarse language. Daily 1:00 3:40 7:40 10:10

FAMOUS PLAYERS
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GATEWAY 8
616-1111 Calgary Tel. 408-8000

MYSTIC RIVER 14A
Coarse language. Fri Sat Sun Mon 12:40 3:40 6:40 9:35 Tue Wed Thu 6:45 9:35

COLD MOUNTAIN 18A
Fri Sat Sun Mon 12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00 Tue Wed Thu 6:40 9:50

TEACHER'S PET G
Fri Sat Sun Mon 1:30 4:20

THE PERFECT SCORE PG
Coarse language. Fri Sat Sun Mon 1:20 4:15 7:30 9:55 Tue Wed Thu 7:30 9:55

MONA LISA SMILE PG
Fri Sat Sun Mon 12:50 3:50 7:00 9:40 Tue Wed Thu 7:00 9:40

CALENDAR GIRLS PG
Nudity. Fri Sat Sun Mon 1:15 4:10 7:05 9:45 Tue Wed Thu 7:05 9:45

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN PG
Violence. Fri Sat Sun Mon 12:15 4:00 8:00 Tue Wed Thu 8:00

GINGER SNAPS II: UNLEASHED 18A
Gory scenes. Fri Sat Sun Mon 1:00 3:30 7:25 10:00 Tue Wed Thu 7:25 10:00

THE BIG BOUNCE PG
Coarse language. 7:10 9:30

WILVERCITY WEST EDMONTON MALL
WEM 9882-170 St. 444-1331

THE LAST SAMURAI 14A
Gory scenes. Fri Sat Sun Mon Tue Wed 12:05 3:20 6:50 10:10 Thu 12:05 3:20 10:05

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 14A
Violence, frightening scenes. 12:15 4:15 8:30

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN G
12:45pm

COLD MOUNTAIN 18A
12:10 3:25 6:40 9:55

BIG FISH PG
Not recommended for young children. 12:30 3:30 6:45 9:20

ALONG CAME POLLY PG
Crude content. 1:25 4:30 7:25 9:35

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT 18A
Disturbing content, violence. 1:15 4:05 7:40 10:15

MIRACLE G
1:00 4:00 7:15 10:10 Cinebance Wed 10pm

YOU GOT SERVED PG
Fri Sat Sun Mon Tue Wed 12:25 2:40 4:55 7:35 9:40 Thu 12:25 2:40 9:40

THE BIG BOUNCE PG
Coarse language. 3:40 7:20 9:50

BARBERSHOP 2: BACK IN BUSINESS PG
Coarse language. Fri Sat Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu 1:10 4:11 7:05 9:45 Sun 1:10 9:45

CATCH THAT KID G
Fri Sat Mon Tue Thu 12:20 2:35 4:45 7:10 9:25 Sun Wed 12:20 2:35 4:45 7:10

50 FIRST DATES PG
No passes. Crude content. 12:00 1:30 2:30 4:20 5:00 7:00 7:30 9:30 10:00

WELCOME TO MOOSEPORT PG
Sneak preview. Sun 7:00

WWE: NO WAY OUT PG
Classification not available. Sun 5:00

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1111 Ave. 1000 Tel. 408-8000

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING 14A
Violence, frightening scenes. Fri Sat Sun Mon 1:15 8:15 Tue Wed Thu 7:40

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT 18A
Disturbing content, violence. Fri Sat Sun Mon 12:30 2:45 5:00 7:15 9:20 Tue Wed 2:45 5:00 7:15 9:20

MONSTER 18A
Sexual violence, coarse language. Fri Sat Sun Mon 1:00 3:40 7:40 10:10 Tue Wed Thu 7:00 9:30

50 FIRST DATES PG
No passes. Crude content. Fri Sat Sun Mon 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:30 Tue Wed Thu 7:00 9:30

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Sweet cels of success

The Animation Show is an all-star roundup of eye-popping visual delights

By DARREN ZENKO

According to the flyer blurb for *The Animation Show*, "the animated short is sadly undervalued and underexposed in American cinema... all too often found [only] in chopped-up form on television, or worse, exhibited on the Internet." While the geek in me isn't quite so ready to pooh-pooh the Net—though it's certainly chock full of crap—it's true that most people don't get a chance to see shorts (animated or

not) in a proper cinema setting. In the tradition of travelling animation fests like *Spike and Mike's*, superstar TV animator Mike Judge (*King of the Hill*, *Beavis and Butt-head*) and substar cult animator Don Hertzfeldt (um... *Lily and Jim*?) set out to rectify this situation with *The Animation Show*, a 90-minute anthology of short animation featuring the work of no fewer than 13 animators (no fewer than six Academy Award nominees among them) from eight countries and four decades, working in an encyclopedia of styles. It's all generally of top-notch quality, but you just know that when a bag's that full, it's going to be mixed.

The high point of the programme is an excerpt from *Mars and Beyond*, a segment of Ward Kimball's 1957 "science-factual" work for Disney. Postulat-

ing a surreal maybe-Mars where life might thrive, this short is a vibrant organic wonderland glowing with colour and populated by an eye-popping menagerie of weird creatures, all animated with a smooth, organic muscularity that's absolute pleasure to watch and shames most of the other work on the roster (though the *deeeep* pockets of animation megaweight Dis-

REVUE ANIMATION

ney arguably had a lot to do with this).

MORE DISNEY COMES (as they say "from the mind of Tim Burton") in the form of *Vincent*, a macabre-lite little story about a boy named Vincent who wants to grow up to be that other Vincent... Vincent Price. Developed in collaboration with longtime-accomplice-to-be Rick Heinrichs, Burton's style (which would become The Burton Style) mixed 2D and 3D in a twisted pseudo-expressionistic world of black-and-white "B" horror and Poe fantasies, and was groundbreaking back in the totally rad to the max world of 1982. Its impact now is softened by the 20 years' worth of remarkably similar work it heralded, but it's still pretty cool. Plus, it's always nice to hear Price's voice, espe-

cially when it's reciting "spooky" ABAB doggerel.

It has been 20 years, though, and so we now have computer animation all over the place. As was the case with the feature-length stunner *The Triplets of Belleville*, digital techniques look and feel best when they enhance traditional animation rather than displace it, and computery techniques are tastefully deployed in shorts like Koji Yamamura's weird tale *Mt. Head* and the German *Das Rad*, a charming "Folly of Man" riff with a time-travel twist. Where 3D computer animation is used exclusively, the Oscar-nominated results are some of the weakest in the collection—the gimmick of Ruairi Robinson's overly slick afterlife parable *50 Percent Grey* has a been-there-done-that feel (maybe almost inevitable with afterlife fables), while Tomek Baginski's *Katedra* is a visually stunning but ultimately empty animated heavy-metal album cover.

These weak stabs from the 3D wing of the art are easily fended off by traditional 2D animation and claymation that makes up the bulk of the *Show's* roster, though it *must* be said (because I'm a jerk) that the claymated *Ricardo* shorts which dot the programme are some of the lamest, most unfunny stuff ever brought to life through the magic of stop-motion and

presented as professional work. But enough about that! Let's focus on winners like *Parking*, a typically gleeful little eco-fable from one of the masters of animated physical comedy, animation-fest staple Bill Plympton, and *Strange Invaders*, the prenatal parental nightmare that earned beloved son of Winnipeg Cordell Barker an Academy Award nomination of his own.

The show-stealers, though, come from the pen (and elsewhere) of cocurator Don Hertzfeldt. He provides opening and closing bumpers for the *Show*, as well as a mind-bending intermission, the so-so (but still award-winning) *Billy's Balloon* and his Oscar-nominated short *Rejected*. Hertzfeldt's work seems simple—is simple—but it vibrates with imagination, joy and humour, all of it sick... and hilarious. Not that animation *needs* to be humorous—that's one of the lingering myths about "cartoons" *The Animation Show* wants to put the boots to—but... well, but nothing. I just happen to really enjoy funny cartoons, okay? Get off my back! ☺

THE ANIMATION SHOW

Directed by Cordell Barker, Ward Kimball, Bill Plympton, Tim Burton, Koji Yamamura and others • Zeidler Hall, The Citadel • Fri-Mon, Feb 13-16 (7pm)
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Portrait of the artist as a young tenant

Vincent van Gogh figures out his destiny in subtle, artful *Vincent in Brixton*

BY PAUL MATWYCHUK

V*incent in Brixton* is the story of the young Vincent van Gogh and his very first love affair—and boy, doesn't that sound like a terrible premise for a play! It brings to mind the laughable Sir Richard Attenborough film *In Love and War*, with Chris O'Donnell playing the young Ernest "Ernie" Hemingway as he falls in love with a pretty, dewy-eyed nurse (Sandra Bullock) while World War I rages about them.

But Nicholas Wright's script, Jim DeFelice's direction and the central performances by Martin Happer as the 20-year-old Vincent and Sandra Nicholls as Ursula Loyer, the woman who becomes his lover, defy expectations and conventions at every turn. For one thing, Ursula is no dewy-eyed, virginal sweetheart but a widow more than twice Vincent's age who battles every day to keep her chronic depression at bay. And for another, Vincent shows few signs of the mad artistic passion that would eventually

consume his life—true, he has a habit of falling in love with women at the drop of a hat, but for the most part he's just a tall, awkward Dutchman who tends to blurt out his thoughts a little too bluntly for him to achieve much social success. Vincent's job as an art dealer for Goupil and Company, selling cheap reproductions of famous paintings and various kitschy etchings, has taken him to London, and the play begins with him arranging with Ursula to rent a room in her

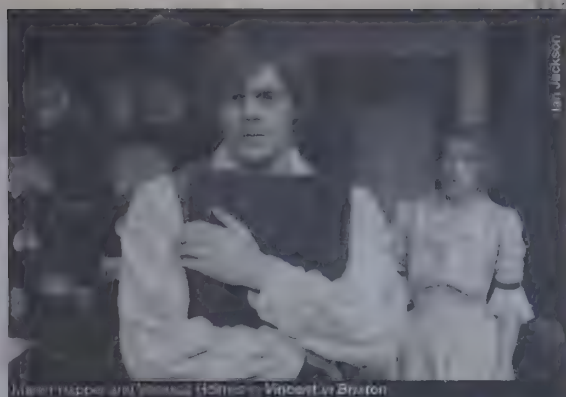
REVUE THEATRE

house. At this point in the story, it's Ursula's other tenant, a stolid young workman named Sam (David MacInnis) who seems like the artist in the house; Vincent doesn't think much of Sam's drawings, but it's Sam who's amassed a portfolio and it's Sam who wins a scholarship to art college.

"**NOTHING IN THIS HOUSE** is what it seems," Sam tells Vincent at the end of their first conversation, and as the play unfolds in its leisurely way over the next couple of hours, Wright and DeFelice skillfully lay out two parallel plotlines dealing with secret romances. Sam turns out to be having an affair with Ursula's beautiful

daughter Eugenie (Rachel Martens), while Vincent, who initially also thinks himself infatuated with Eugenie, realizes his true soulmate is Ursula. He makes this discovery in the play's middle scene, a long late-night conversation between Vincent and Ursula that ends with the heartstopping, silent image of Ursula sitting on a kitchen stool, slowly, painstakingly unbuttoning her widow's dress while Vincent watches, nearly too enraptured even to move. It's an unusually erotic scene—Nicholls has been so good at capturing the guardedness in Ursula's dealings with other people (especially the helplessly unguarded Vincent) that it's a shock to see her let her defences down so completely.

But the final scene of the play is even more powerful. Vincent has returned to the Loyer household two years after deserting Ursula without so much as giving her a proper explanation; Ursula has retreated nearly completely into the cave of her depression, while Vincent, starving, essentially unemployed, his clothes in tatters, can do nothing but rave about his newfound passion for preaching the word of Christ. He seems like such a hopeless, misguided failure that Ursula can barely bring herself to look at him—this fool was the man she had thought would give her life meaning?



Not even the fact that Vincent would, of course, turn out to be an artist of genius lessens the pain of this extraordinary scene. The agony on Nicholls's face is too acute, too immediate for that—it reminds us all of what a terrible loss we feel when the person we fall most deeply in love with disappoints us.

OBVIOUSLY, *Vincent in Brixton* is not your garden-variety story of a budding artist. This is not the *Finding Forrester* version of the artist's life, where some charismatic, inspiring mentor fills the young Vincent with quotable life lessons about "believing in himself" and living passionately. Instead, Vincent simply absorbs his various experiences in Ursula's home (all of which, I should emphasize, are Wright's invention) and lets them percolate inside him. We can see how they lay the groundwork for his eventual decision to become a full-time artist, but that's more a general impression you form from a host of oblique clues and suggestions than anything Wright ever comes right

out and announces to you. (Colin Winslow's set features a large projected image of *Starry Night* that winks in and out at the beginning and end of each act, like a teasing glimpse of future wonders that none of the characters can even imagine themselves living to see, let alone having contributed to their creation.)

Happer gives a major performance here as Vincent—even at his most comic and pathetic, you believe that this ardent, graceless young man has it in him to become a great painter. (And Happer's un-self-conscious mastery of the Dutch accent gives him turn an added layer of authenticity.) Nicholls, as I've said, is marvelous as well—she makes such an impression that she commands the stage even at the start of the final scene, sitting with her back to the audience and not saying a word. Now that's artistry. ●

VINCENT IN BRIXTON

Directed by Jim DeFelice • Written by Nicholas Wright • Starring Martin Happer and Sandra Nicholls • The Roxie (10708-124 St) • 453-2440 • To Be 22

Apartment zeroes

A coke deal and a friendship both go bad in bittersweet *This Is Our Youth*

BY PAUL MATWYCHUK

T*his Is Our Youth* takes place over the course of 48 hours in the New York apartment of 21-year-old Dennis Ziegler (Nathan Cuckow, wearing a mustache apparently on loan from John Oates), which is definitely not a fun place to be. First of all, it's 1982, which means the carpet is brown, the wallpaper is a sickly yellow-orange and the kitchen contains some of the most hideous avocado-green cabinets in the history of home furnishings. And Dennis's stunted sense of interior decoration pretty much consists of putting a mattress in one corner, setting up the TV and the stereo nearby and sticking a few photos to the wall with masking tape. You can spot an old pair of underwear and a couple of neckties that he's tossed into a nearby corner, more or less near the closet.

But it's Dennis's toxic personality

that truly makes the place seem inhospitable. When his best friend Warren (Chris Bulough) shows up looking for a place to crash after getting kicked out of his house by his abusive father, Dennis is completely unsympathetic—he refers to Warren as an idiot, an imbecile and an asshole so repeatedly and so offhandedly that it's obvious he's barely aware they're insults anymore. It's only when Warren reveals that he stole \$15,000 from his father's bedroom (amusingly, he's stuffed the

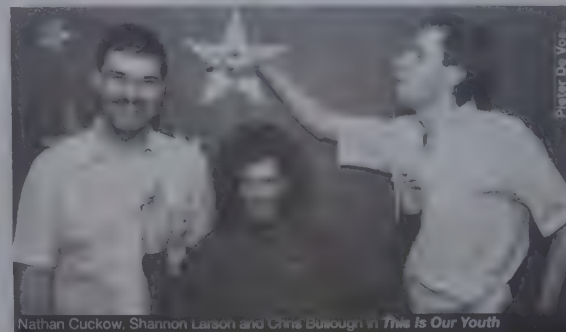
REVUE THEATRE

loot into a big red bag labeled "Junior Achievement") that Dennis warms to the idea of letting Warren stick around. Knowing that they'll have to return the cash and repay the money Warren's already spent by the end of the weekend, Dennis (a small-time drug dealer who fancies himself quite the criminal operator) hatches a plan: they'll buy some cocaine, invite a couple of girls over, have a party and then sell the leftover coke the next morning for a tidy little profit, which they'll split between them. And even though it's Warren's money financing the

entire deal, Dennis bullies him into accepting a lesser share of the profits. And then, instead of thanking him, he gives him a nasty, painful pinch on the forearm.

Dennis is quite a piece of work, and it's kind of relief when he leaves the apartment to go buy the cocaine. I think Cuckow and director Kevin Suttle have gone too far in portraying the ugly side of Dennis's personality, to the point where he frequently seems not just aggressive and competitive but downright psychotic—he screams so much he makes Sam Kinson seem like a pretty mellow dude. Toned down a bit, we might see the dark, irresistible charisma that keeps Warren hanging around him. And sure enough, Cuckow's best moments are the quiet ones at the end of the play when Dennis, still reeling from a shocking offstage development, delivers a long, rambling, hilariously solipsistic monologue in which he starts out talking about how scared he is of death but winds up prattling on and on about what a fantastic movie director he'd be.

Chris Bulough lends his usual gawky charm to Warren, a good-hearted, enthusiastic, not particularly



shrewd-minded kid whose personality is still unformed enough for Dennis to be able to ride roughshod over him. Warren in many ways is still an emotional prepubescent—he shows up at Dennis's dragging a gigantic suitcase full of vintage toys, lunchboxes and sports memorabilia—and Bulough does a nice job of showing how Warren instinctively behaves with the unthinking enthusiasm of a kid even when sex and drugs are involved. I love the moment, for instance, when Dennis and Warren are planning their big night with the girls and Warren, whose drug experience is limited pretty much to pot, pipes up and says, "Let's do speedballs!" He's like one of those kids who, the moment their

parents leave them alone in the house, immediately want to try tobogganing off the roof or taking the cat's tail and tying firecrackers to it.

The play ends, though, with Warren having to sell off nearly his entire collection of childhood mementoes (and not even getting a good price for them) and taking his first few tentative steps toward becoming an adult. But adulthood seems about as grim and lonely a place as Dennis's apartment—during the play, Warren embarks upon his first significant sexual relationship and then somehow manages to screw it all up in less than 24 hours. His momentarily girlfriend

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The voyeur next time

Trevor Schmidt spies on his amorous neighbours in *Trading Hearts*

By PAUL MATWYCHUK

It took Trevor Schmidt only two days to write *Trading Hearts*, but eight years to bring it to Edmonton. The script came about the same way that so many of Schmidt's scripts seem to originate these days:

with an old friend asking him if he'd do them a favour and write something for them. "I was doing a lot of directing in Calgary and had kind of established myself as a mainstream director," says Nikki Loach, who's known Schmidt ever since they went

PREVIEW THEATRE

to high school together. (Schmidt even wrote a short play, *Snatch*, based on an argument they once had.) "But I got very friendly with a choreographer, Brian Hansen, and he was say-

ing, 'Let's do a show! Let's do a show!' We were going to do a dance drama. It was a bit of an experiment and I said, 'Well, first we need some kind of text.' So we went to Trevor and told him what we wanted, and he banged out this script in two days and gave it to us—and then he went and moved to Edmonton!"

But "script" is a poor word to apply to what Schmidt handed over to Loach; she describes the initial version of *Trading Hearts* as looking more like an 80-page poem, a meditation on love and loss that felt so intimate it could have been ripped out of Schmidt's private journal. With Schmidt out of town, Hansen and Loach began work on taking the text apart, rearranging it and adapting it into a dance show. They identified three characters: an unnamed pair of lovers whose relationship is plagued equally by dark secrets and petty everyday misunderstandings and miscommunications, and a Voyeur who watches them obsessively from his apartment across the way and who seems to be projecting his own thoughts and desires upon them.

AFTER MEETING with several dancers, Hansen and Loach brought Anita Miotti on board to play the woman, ("She argued a lot and had her own ideas," Loach says, "and so we went, 'Yup—she's the one for us.'") And even though the finished piece hasn't exactly been a sensation—Loach estimates that maybe 300 people at most have seen it in its various incarnations since 1996—the three of them keep returning fondly to it over and over again. This new production at Northern Light Theatre, with Schmidt himself joining the cast for the first time as the Voyeur, may be its best chance yet to attract a wide audience.

"Trevor was scared to take part in it," Loach says. "I think he was very nervous about coming in and working with dancers. He kept saying, 'It's so good! I'm going to wreck it!' But he doesn't have any reason to be scared at all, even though I suppose he is joining something that's already in motion and where Anita, Brian and I have already established a pretty strong bond between the three of us. But we're open to change—I mean, it's his play, so he does kind of have the right to go, 'That's not what I'm saying here.' And I think his involvement has really enriched the play, particularly the character of the Voyeur. I think our other Voyeurs tended to be kind of an afterthought; we were so focussed on getting the dance pieces down and we didn't give as much thought to who is this person and why is he so invested in this couple? And Trevor's really great at that emotional material—I think in a lot of ways he identifies very strongly with this character. He's the kind of guy who always walks in and gets invested in other people's business. What can I say? He's an emotional rollercoaster kind of person, and it's great to have that in the rehearsal hall." ●

READING HEARTS

Directed by Nikki Loach • Written by Trevor Schmidt • Starring Brian Hansen, Anita Miotti and Trevor Schmidt • The Third Space (11516-103 St) • Feb 12-22 • 471-1586



theatre notes

By PAUL MATWYCHUK

Kaboom! continues

"Not only can I play the stereo, but I can type it as well!" jokes Leonard, the lonely, middle-aged gay man—he's a walking cliché and he knows it—who's the central character in Daniel MacIvor's new one-man show *Cul-de-sac*. He could be speaking for MacIvor as well, who plays more than eight characters in this show, all of them neighbours on the same dead-end street, all of them familiar "types." There's a gabby housewife and her uncouth husband; a bored, precocious teenaged girl; a retired widower prone to rambling anecdotes about "the good old days"; a fiftysomething matron with pretensions toward cultural sophistication, and so on. They're all awakened in the middle of the night by a mysterious sound emanating from Leonard's house, and as the sound winds its way through the neighbourhood they each talk about what they were doing that night and reflect upon their (for the most part sketchy) memories of Leonard. Leonard, meanwhile, serves as the play's master of ceremonies, maintaining his ironic, self-deprecating tone even after it becomes apparent that the noise everyone's reacting to is the sound of him dying.

Cul-de-sac is the kind of play that's so consistently funny and entertaining and expertly performed that it scarcely matters that its themes don't quite gel and the various moments don't add up to something larger than themselves. It's a kick to watch how fully MacIvor invests himself into each of these characters, each of whom has their own distinctive body language and speaking rhythm—he nails the affected cadences of the pretentious Virginia, the resentful "what-ever" tones of teenaged Madison Paige Turner and the gentle, tortoiselike tangents of crusty old Bick Bickerson.

Each of these monologues is a small jewel of comic writing, impeccably timed and phrased and full of genuine affection for their quirky thought processes. (In one of the play's loveliest moments, Bick delivers a speech about the process of writing and mailing a letter that starts out seeming almost hilariously tedious, only to imperceptibly change into an unexpectedly moving meditation on human connections. And then it gets hilarious again!) I get the feeling, in fact, that MacIvor may have started out writing *Cul-de-sac* intending to create a neighbourhood where everyone is too narrow-minded and self-absorbed to notice someone dying of loneliness right next to them—only to fall in love with every single character in the script. Many of MacIvor's characters do commit acts of unthinking cruelty upon Leonard, but he doesn't seem all that interested in judging them harshly for it.

Instead, the play has only one true villain: Eric, a drugged-up hustler who

appears at the climax of the play, showing off his muscles and doing karate kicks at the end of every sentence. As flamboyantly as MacIvor plays him, though, he's the show's weakest element—I had trouble buying the scenario that MacIvor invents for him, and it's unclear how Eric fits into the play's principal themes of transformation and community. Actually, that's only what Leonard says the play's main themes are; I'd say *Cul-de-sac* is really about MacIvor's own virtuosity as a writer and performer. Many reviewers have compared it to Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*—MacIvor might have called it *My Town*. With another performer at centre stage, the result might have been a self-indulgent ego trip, but luckily MacIvor really is a virtuoso, and *Cul-de-sac* is the opposite of a creative dead end.

Cul-de-sac runs until February 15 at La Cité francophone (8627-91 Street), but the **Kaboom!** festival continues for six days after that with two separate series of staged readings of new plays. Like last year, there'll be two nights of **Playwrights Garage Readings** (February 17-18), 12 new short plays by the members of Workshop West's developmental program for young playwrights, taught by playwright Vern Thiessen. But unlike last year, the Springboards New Play Reading Series, which in the past has been held as a distinct event later on in the spring, will be brought underneath the Kaboom! tent and renamed the **Springboards/Test Drive Reading Series** (February 19-21).

Workshop West artistic director Ron Jenkins explains. "Vern Thiessen [who's in charge of new play development at the Citadel] had all these Citadel play commissions, we had this festival, it's plays we're both interested in, and we just figured, 'Why not do this together?' It just made sense to share our resources and run Springboards and the Citadel's Test Drive as a single event."

While many avid Edmonton theatregoers attend Springboards as a way to get a privileged first peek at shows that will soon get full productions—recent Springboards scripts include Beth Graham and Daniela Vaskalic's *The Last Train*, Ron Chambers's *17 Dogs* and Thiessen's own *Apple*—for the playwrights, it's a valuable, low-stakes environment in which to try out still-evolving scripts in front of an audience. "Playwrights, I find, are generally pretty eager to go into this process," Jenkins says. "And they know Springboards attracts intelligent audiences who usually see a lot of theatre—they know they're not just going to get a lot of 'I hated it, it stinks' comments. Besides, plays are meant to be played. There's only so much that can happen when it's just a playwright and his desk."

This year, the event will put three plays in the spotlight: Cathleen Rootsaert's *Abigail in Twilight* (February 19), a Carol Shields-y memory piece about a woman who finds herself reflecting on her past romances on her 50th birthday; Trina Davies's *Shatter* (February 20), set in the aftermath of the devastating 1917 Halifax explosion; and Clem Martin's *Control* (February 21), an intense drama based on the 2001 Drumheller prison riot. All three readings take place at 8 p.m. at La Cité francophone. ●

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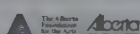
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DANCE

AMOUR, ACIDE ET NOIR John L. Haer Theatre, 10045-156 St (420-1757) • Choreographed by Daniel Lévesle • Presented by the Brian Webb Dance Company • Feb. 20-21 9pm • Tickets available at TIX on the Square

AMAS Lublee Auditorium, 11455-87 Ave (428-6839/451-0000) • New works created by four choreographers: Margie Gillis (Canadian contemporary-dance), Lorraine Lapanian (Boston-based), Emily Molnar (Ballet British Columbia soloist), Sabrina Christine Matthews (Alberta Ballet) • Feb. 20-21 (8pm) • Tickets from \$18.10-\$58.10 • Tickets available at Alberta Ballet, TicketMaster

GALLERIES/MUSEUMS

ALBERTA CRAFT COUNCIL GALLERY 10186-106 St (488-6611/488-5900) • Open Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm, Thu 10am-5pm (closed all day) • **WIND CHILL - 40 C OR WINTER WOVENS** Members • **Discover Gallery: DIVERSION** Dance show, until Feb. 27 • Lasten and glass artworks by Fern Jordan, until Feb. 21

ALL SAINTS' ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL 10035-103 St (477-0001/428-6323) • Open: Mon, Wed, Fri 10am-2pm, Thu-Fri 5pm-8pm, Sat noon-4pm, Sun 9:30am-2:30pm • **ANGELICUS AND THE WESTERN CHRISTIAN TRADITION** • **INTELLIGENCE AND CHANGE** Textile panels in the Cathedral Hall track the history of the Christian Church in Britain since the time of the Romans • Until Feb. 12

ART BEAT GALLERY 26 St. Anne St., St. Albert (459-6797) • Paintings by gallery artists. Glassworks by Jeff Holmwood and Susan Gottseig. Prints by Brian Hohnher and Tobi • Until Feb. 22

ARTSHAW STUDIO GALLERY 3rd Floor, Knol Building, 10217-106 St (423-2966) • Open Thu 5pm or by appointment • Artworks by Ryan Brown, Jeff Collins, Aaron Johnson, Tim Rechner, Paul Roberts, Gabriela Rosende, Russell Swain, Anna Szul, Eugene Uhlen and guests

CENTRE D'ARTS VISUELS DE L'ALBERTA 9103-95 Ave (461-3427) • **ARTISTIC EXPRESSION** Paintings by Gao Peng • Theme: Watercolours and photos by Isabelle Frichette, a trove of artworks by Lee Bee • Until Feb. 18

CHRISTIE BERGSTROM'S RED GALLERY 9621-82 Ave (439-8210) • Open Mon-Fri 11am-5pm • **A VIEW TO UNDERSTANDING** Portraits by Christl Bergstrom; until March

EDMONTON ART GALLERY 2 Sir Winston Churchill Sq (423-6223) • Open Tue-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 10am-5pm • **MAXWELL BATES: AT THE CROSSROADS OF EXPRESSIONISM** Feb. 21-Apr. 18; **Curation's Tour** Sat, Feb. 21 (1pm, 2pm) • **THE OTHER LANDSCAPE** until Feb. 15 • **GODZILLA VS. KATIBORDERS**, until Feb. 22 • **KIM ADAMS AND DAVID OFFOS**, until Feb. 22 • **CRAIG LEBLANC WORK FROM THE PHOMORE JUNK** until Feb. 22 • **Children's Gallery: PELLEROUND** until Jan. 20 • **ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN** film series: Tue, Feb. 12, 24 (7pm) • **FAMILY** • **ART SUNDAY**: Sun, Feb. 16 (12-4pm) • \$15 • \$12/\$10 student/senior, \$5 (children 6-12) free (member/children 5 and under)

ELECTRUM DESIGN STUDIO 12419 Stony Plain Rd (482-1402) • Open Tue-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat 10am-5pm • **TURNING A NEW PAGE** Woodworks by Mason Eyben • Until Feb. 28

EXTENSION CENTRE GALLERY 2nd Flr University Extension Centre, 8303-112 St (492-3034) • Open Mon-Thu 8:30am-8pm, Fri 9:30am-4:30pm, Sat 9am-noon • **FOOD FOR THE CULT** Paintings by Rose Uzenburger, graduating student exhibition; until Feb. 22 • Opening reception: Fri, Feb. 13 (6-8pm)

FAB GALLERY Room 1-1, Fine Arts Building, 112 St. 89 Ave, U of A Campus (492-2081) • Open Tue-Fri 10am-5pm • **FOLDING OPEN** Printworks by Jessica Hali-Patch, until Feb. 14 • **DESIGNING** Design works by Milena Radakowski; until Feb. 14

FORT DOOR 10308-81 Ave (432-7535) • Open Mon-Wed 10am-6pm, Thu-Fri 10am-9pm, Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 12-5pm • Eskimo sculpture carvings kayak by Charlie Ogilvie, West Coast Indian and Eskimo silver and gold jewellery by L. Aashman • Until Feb. 29

FRINGE GALLERY Bsm 10516 Whyte Ave (432-0240) • Open Mon-Sat 9:30am-6pm • **GROUP OF NINE** Staff show • Through February

GALLERY DE JONGE 27022A Hwy 16A, Spruce Grove (962-9505) • Open Tue-Sun 11am-5pm, anytime by appointment • Work by local artists Beth Couls, Earl Cummins, Henry de Jager and Mary Masters

GIORDANO GALLERY 10080 Jasper Ave (429-5066) • Tony Calzetta, Ugo Rodrigues, Barbara Balachay, Tony Calzetta • Until Mar. 1

GRANT MACLEWAN COLLEGE South Campus, 7319-29 Ave • **ORCHID SHOW**: Feb. 20-22; Fri, Feb. 20 (12-8pm); Sat/Sun (9am-5pm)

HARCOURT HOUSE 10215-112 St (426-4180) • Open Mon-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat 12-4pm • **TERRIBLE** Artworks by Jeffrey Burns • Feb. 12-Mar. 20 • opening reception: Feb. 12 (7pm)

JOHNSON GALLERY 7711-85 St (465-6171) • Open: Mon-Fri 9am-5:30pm, Sat 9am-5pm • Artworks by various artists • Through February

JOHNSON GALLERY 11817-80 St (479-8424) • Open Mon-Fri 9:30am-5:30pm, Sat 9:30am-4pm • **Self-portraits** by Meredith Evans, Illingworth Kerr, Luke Sommers, Prints by Myles MacDonald, Wendy Risdale, Jim Akerman. Pottery by Blackmore Studios. African Masks • Through February

LATITUDE 53 10248-106 St (423-5353) • **Main Space: LEAVE/PAUSE/REWIND** Installation by Brian Craig; Feb. 20-Mar. 12 • **35 DAYS TO LEAVE YOUR COVER** Music by Matt Masters (Toronto), DJ Bryana, kargale with Neve, silent auction and more; Sat, Feb. 14 (8pm), \$5 (member, adv)/\$7 (non-member, adv)/\$10 (door)

LISTEN RECORDS 10649-124 St (429-16143) • Open Mon-Wed 11am-6pm, Thu-Fri 11am-10pm, Sat 11am-6pm, Sun noon-5pm • **MOUTH WATERING** Paintings by Matthew Golden • Until Feb. 28

NEPHEW MUSEUM OF THE FINE ARTS GALLERY 51 St, Stony Plain (963-2777) • Open 10am-4pm • First Parkland Artists' Guild biennial show; until Mar. 8

MUSÉE HÉRITAGE MUSEUM 5 St. Anne Street, St. Albert (459-1528) • Open Mon-Sat 10am-5pm; Sun 1-5pm • **INXSUKS: IF STONES COULD SPEAK**: Feb. 14-Apr. 18

OTTENWELL ART CENTRE 590 Broadmead Blvd, Sherwood Park • **WE ART FRIENDS** Artworks by various artists • Sat, Feb. 14 (10am-5pm), Sat, Feb. 15 (noon-4pm) • Opening reception: Fri, Feb. 13 (7-10pm)

PROFILES PUBLIC ART GALLERY 19 Person Street, St. Albert (460-4310) • Open Tue-Sat 10-5pm, Thu 10am-8pm • **CAPTIVATING COMMODE** Three lavatories created by Cempert, Nicole Gaillet, Paul Freeman; until Mar. 5 • **1973/4E** Artworks by Nicole Gaillet, David Mann, Margaret Witsch; until Mar. • **ADVENTURES** AD Systems Group Part Two: Children 6-12 create media artworks; Feb. 21 (4-6pm)

PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF ALBERTA 8555 Roper Rd, 51 Ave 86 St (427-1750) • **ARCHIVES IN YOUR ATTIC** Part of National Heritage Week. Demonstrations, videos, and tours • Feb. 16 (10am-4:30pm) • Free

PROVINCIAL MUSEUM OF ALBERTA 12845-102 Ave (453-9100) • Open: Sat-Thu 9am-5pm, Fri 9am-9pm • **TEDDY BEARS ARE BACK**; until Feb. 16 • **BIG THINGS 2** Featuring large-scale sculptures by the artists of the North Edmonton Sculpture Workshop; until Apr. 30 • **STRONG CANADA ABORIGINAL PEOPLES GALLERY**: Spans 11,000 years and 500 generations, people of the past and present, recordings, film, lights, artifacts and more. Permanent exhibit • **The Natural History Gallery**: **BIG ROOM** Live invertebrate display. Permanent exhibit • **THE BIRD GALLERY** Mounted birds. Permanent exhibit • **TREASURES OF THE EARTH**: Geology collection. Permanent exhibit • **WILD ALBERTA GALLERY** Permanent exhibit • **A TO Z AT THE MUSEUM**, Every Sat (9am-11pm): family fun drop-in program

RED STRAP ART MARKET 10305-97 St (497-2211) • Featuring folk art by George Toszczak • Opening reception: Sat, Feb. 14 (5-8pm)

SCOTT GALLERY 10411-124 St (488-3619) • Open Tue-Sat 10am-5pm • **POTPOURRI**: Landscape and floral watercolours by Robert Sinclair • Until Feb. 24

SEGHERS STUDIO GALLERY 6th Flr, North Tower, 10030 107 St, Seventh Street Plaza (423-6885) • Open Tue-Thu 5:30-9pm or by appointment • Artworks by David Seghers, Robert von Eschen, Erv. Butterworth, Bianca Khan, Linda Mannes, Neil McClelland, Jacquelyn Mulyk, Kelvin Beck • Through February

SNAP GALLERY 10137-104 St (423-1492) • Open Tue-Sat 12-5pm • **MINI STIES** Photographic printworks by Steve Dixon; Feb. 13-Mar. 13 • Opening reception: Thu, Feb. 19 (7-9pm)

SNOWBIRD GALLERY WEM, 8882-170 St (444-1024) • Work by J. Yardley-Jones and Gregg Johnson, acrylics by Jim West, pottery by Noburo Kubo and Jacqueline Stenberg

SPECTRUM ART GALLERY AND STUDIO 11745 Jasper Ave (482-6677) • Open daily 10am-6pm • Paintings by Christopher Laska, Patricia Young, Bridget Turner, Deanna Larson and David Phillips

STUDIO GALLERY 143 Grandin Park Plaza, St. Albert (460-5900) • **THE COLLECTIVE**: Artworks by eight artists • Through February

URBAN GRIND 10124-124 St (995-5438) • **M.A.D.D. ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHY**: Photographs by Crystal Pulin • Feb. 17-Mar. 1 • Opening reception: Mon, Feb. 16 (8-11pm)

VAAA GALLERY 3rd Flr, Harcourt House, 10215-112 St (421-1731) • **PAIRIE SCAPES** Landscape paintings and drawings by Mary Wenzel, Mel Stevenson and James Cupido; Feb. 12-Mar. 20; opening reception: Feb. 12 (7:30-9:30pm)

THE WORKS GALLERY Commerce Place, 10150-Jasper Ave (426-2122 ext. 226) • Artworks by Edmontonians 12-17 years • Opening reception: Sun, Feb. 15 (2-4pm) • Feb. 15-20

LITERARY

AUDREYS BOOKS 10702 Jasper Ave (423-3487) • Tania MacDonald reads from her book of poetry, *Reverie*. Stephen Scobie reads from *Alas Bob Dylan* • Feb. 19 (7:30pm) • Free

CALABASH CAFE 10630-124 St (414-6625) • Every Wed (7:30pm): *The Poet's Ouvre* readings by Local authors

LIVE COMEDY

ARDEN THEATRE 5 St. Anne Street, St. Albert (459-1542) • Norman Foote with guests, part of the *Family Series* • Sun, Feb. 15 (1pm and 3:30pm)

THE COMEDY FACTORY 3414 Gateway Boulevard (469-4999) • Tim Kosko; Feb. 12-14 • Roger Chandler; Feb. 19, 21

FARGO'S 10307-82 Ave (433-4526) • Improv comedy • Every Sun

RED'S WEM (481-6420) • Hypno Sundays: With hypnotist Salsesh • 9:30pm • Free

STANLEY A. MUIR LIBRARY THEATRE 716-1080 Churchill Sq (433-2932/420-1757) • *Living, Laughing and Loving*: Presented by T.A.L.E.S. • Fri, Feb. 20 (7:30pm) • \$10 (adult)/\$25 (family package) • Tickets available at door, TIX on the Square 420-1757, T.A.L.E.S.

WINSPEAR CENTRE (428-1414) • André-Philippe Cagnon with Robert Michaels • Tue, Feb. 17 (8pm) • \$51 • Tickets available at Winspear box office 428-1414

THEATRE

BLUE/ORANGE The Citadel, Rice Theatre, 9828-101A Ave (425-1820) • David Storch directs British playwright Joe Penhall's issue-driven drama about a young psychiatrist battling his money-conscious supervisor over the fate of one of his patients, a black man whose schizophrenia makes him a dangerous candidate for release • Until Feb. 15 • Tickets available at Citadel Theatre box office

THE BOYS FROM SYRACUSE John L. Haer Theatre, MacEwan Centre for the Arts, 10045-156 St (497-4408) • Presented by Grant MacEwan College (497-4408) • Rodgers and Hart's classic 1938 musical farce, based on William Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors*, about the complications that ensue when two pairs of identical twins—two identical masters and two identical slaves none of whom knows of the others' existence—arrive at the same time in the city of Ephesus • Until Feb. 14

CHIMPOTV Verscona Theatre, 10329-83 Ave (448-0695) • Long-form improvisational sketches performed by Rapid Fire Theatre's top improvisers • Every Sat (11pm) except last Sat of each month

DIE-NASTY Verscona Theatre, 10329-83 Ave (448-0695) • Jeff Haslam, Stephanie Wolfe, Mark Meer, Josh Dean, Donna Stewart and Leona Brausen celebrate the 13th season of Edmonton's legendary live improvised soap opera by spoofing the '50s melodramas of Douglas Sirk and Grace Metalious • Every Monday (8pm)

ESPRESSO Kassa Theatre, Jubilee Auditorium (420-1757) • Morris Erman directs Lucia Frangione (who also wrote the script) and Todd Thomson in this comedy/drama about three women, all from different generations, all members of the same dysfunctional Italian family, who come together when a car crash threatens to take the life of the man they all love • Feb. 21-Mar. 20, Tue-Sat (8pm, Fri-Sun (3pm)) • \$25/\$32 (each for groups of 10 or more) • Tickets available at TIX on the Square 420-1757

HARRY AND SALLY'S WEDDING Jubalions Dinner Theatre, WEM, 882-170 St (484-2424) • Until Apr. 4 • Wed, Thu, Sun, 3:45-9:15; Fri-Sat 5:45-9:15; child (12 and under) \$20.05, senior (Wed only) \$31.05

INHERIT THE WIND Leduc Performing Arts Centre, 4308-50 St, Leduc (987-0878) • Presented by the Leduc Drama Society • Fred Kong directs Jeanne Lawrence and Robert Lee's theatrical chestnut, a fictionalized version of the celebrated 1925 Scopes "monkey trial" • Feb. 19-21, 26-28 (8pm) • \$8 (Thu)/\$10 (Fri, Sat) • Tickets available at Black Gold Service Centre, Leduc Public Library

JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR Jubilee Auditorium, 11455-87 Ave (427-2760/451-8000) • Eric Kunze and Lawrence Clayton star in Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical about the life and death of everyone's favourite tune-betning messiah, Jesus Christ • Until Feb. 16 (8pm) • Tickets available at TicketMaster

KABOOM! FESTIVAL La Cité Francophone, 8627 Rue Marie-Anne Gaboury (427-5955/420-1750) • Presented by Workshop West Theatre • Until Feb. 21 • Workshop West's annual festival of new Canadian plays. Featuring *Cul-de-Sac*, an eerie new play by Daniel Machor and Daniel Brooks, the creators of *House and Monster* (until Feb. 15); *Powernight*: George Readings, two evenings of staged readings of short plays by this year's graduates of Workshop West's training program for emerging playwrights (Feb. 17-18); and *Springboards*, staged readings of hot new Canadian plays currently in development (Feb. 19-21) • \$18 (adult)/\$15 (student/senior) • Tickets available at TIX on the Square

MEASURE FOR MEASURE The Citadel, MacEwan Theatre, 9828-101A Ave (425-1820) • Bob Baker directs David Storch in William Shakespeare's 1604 "problem play"

This Is Our Youth

Continued from page 49

is Jessica, a tightly-wound F.I.T. student (nicely played by Shannon Larson, a veritable '80s vision in big hair, a gold wrap belt and Dim stockings), and Bulough and Larson subtly convey how these two characters manage to talk themselves out of ever seeing each other again, even though they want exactly the opposite to happen

This Is Our Youth was written by

Kenneth Lonergan, who knows how brilliant and free you can feel when you're young, but who also realizes young people are nowhere near as brilliant as they think they are. And he loves them for it. In other words, it's a play for all ages. ☺

THIS IS OUR YOUTH

Directed by Kevin Suley • Written by Kenneth Lonergan • Starring Chris Bulough, Nathan Cuckow and Shannon Larson • Azimuth Theatre (11315-106 Ave) • To Feb. 21 • 454-0583

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SPECIAL EVENTS

COPS FOR CANCER • Phase One Centre Fountain Stage, WEM (455-7181); The Stationary Bike Ride: Members of Edmonton's Cops For Cancer Ironman Team ride for 9 days; Feb. 13-21 (9am-5pm) • **Fantasyland Hotel Ballroom, WEM (455-7181); Auction and Dance:** silent auction and cocktails (5:30pm), dinner (7pm), live music to follow; music with the Big Breakfast Boogie Band; Feb. 21; \$60/\$500 (table for 10) • **Fundraiser for Cops for Cancer**

FRUIT GROWERS FESTIVAL Devonian Botanic Garden, 12 km north of Devon on Hwy 60 (787-3054) • Featuring local growers, displays, lectures and information • Sun, Feb. 14 (10am-4pm) • Regular admission rates apply

KIDS LOVE THE STRAPE! Red Strap Art Market, 10305-97 St (497-2211) • Celebrate Valentine's Day, free work-shops for kids, face painting, live entertainment • Feb. 14 (12-3pm)

LEAP INTO LENT WITH MARDI GRAS Newman Theological College, 15611 St. Albert Trail (447-2993) •

CLASSIFIEDS

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KARAOKE

AVENUE PIZZA 8519-112 St (432-0536) • Every Thu (9:30pm)

B-STREET 11818-111 Ave (414-0545) • Every Wed-Sun (9pm); with Brad Scott

BILLY BOB'S Continental Inn, 16625 Stony Plain Rd (484-7751) • Every Thu (9pm); Music Trivia with Escapade Entertainment • Every Fri/Sat (9:30pm); with Escapade Entertainment

BLUE QUILL 326 Saddleback Rd (434-3124) • Every Fri/Sat (10pm)

BORDERLINE PUB 3226-82 St (462-1888) • Every Thu-Sat (9:30pm)

CAMELOT SPORTS BAR 10231-95 St (425-4298) • Every Sun (8pm); Hosted by Jeannie

CLAREVIEW PUB Victoria Trail, 132 Ave (414-1111) • Every Tue (9:30pm-2am)

CLIFF CLAYTON'S 9710-105 St (424-1614) • Every Fri/Sat (10pm)

DOYLE'S PUB 2619-151 Ave (483-1963) • Every Fri/Sat (9:30pm) with Dee Dee

DRUID 11606 Jasper Ave (454-2989) • Every Wed

FRANCO'S 14059 Victoria Trail (467-4636) • Every Thu-Sat (9pm); with Woody

GAS PUMP 10166-114 St (488-4841) • Every Tue/Wed (9:30pm)

HILLVIEW PUB 311 Woodvale Rd W, Millwoods (462-0468) • Every Fri/Sat (9:30-1am)

INGLEWOOD PUB 12402-118 Ave (451-1390) • Every Fri-Sat (9:30pm)

JIMMY RAY'S 15211-111 Ave (486-3390) • Every Sat (9pm)

KELLY'S 11540 Jasper Ave (451-8825) • Every Sun/Wed (9pm)

L.B.'S 23 Alkins Dr, St. Albert (460-9100) • Every Tue/Thu (9pm)

LEGENDS 6104-162 St (481-2786) • Every Wed (9pm)

MARK'S BACK PUB 13403 Fort Rd (406-5152) • Every Fri/Sat (9pm); with Shawn the Bomb

MICHAEL'S 11730 Jasper Ave (482-4767) • Every Mon; with Jammin' Jamie

ORLANDO'S 15163-121 St (457-1195) • Every Sun (9pm)/Wed (10pm)

ORLANDO'S II 135 80-127 St (451-7998) • Every Wed/Thu (9pm)

OVERLAND RESTAURANT 12960 St. Albert Tr (454-0667) • Every Fri/Sat (9pm); with Big Time Entertainment

ROSARIO'S PUB 11715-108 Ave (447-4727) • Daily (9pm)

ROSEBOWL PIZZA 10111-117 St (482-5152) • Every Wed/Sat (9pm)

ROSE'S BAR AND GRILL DOWNTOWN 10604-107 St (423-3499) • Every Tue-Sat (9pm-1am) with Ruth

ROSE'S BAR AND GRILL HIGHTSTREET 10315-124 St (482-1600) • Daily (9:30pm)

ROSE'S BAR AND GRILL OLD STRATHCONA 10473-80 Ave (439-7211) • Thu, Fri, Sat (9:30pm-1:30am)

SHERLOCK HOLMES 10341-82 Ave (439-9676) • Every Sun (9pm); with Scott

STRATHAIRN PUB 9514-87 St (465-5478) • Every Wed/Fri (9pm)

TODAY'S 5224-86 St (465-6223) • Every Fri/Sat (9pm-1am); every Tue (8pm-midnight)

WOODY'S 11725 Jasper Ave, upstairs (488-6636) • Every Sun/Tue (7pm-midnight); with Terrance; every Mon/Wed (7pm-midnight); with Annie

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Interested applicants should send a letter and resume to Azimuth Theatre, 11315 106 Ave, Edmonton AB, T5H 0R6. Applications will be accepted until Mar 15

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VALENTINE EVENTS

ARTS BARN 10330-84 Ave (420-1757) • Latin Valentine, 3 Day Dance: America Rosa, DJ Moreno, DJ Spice • Sat, Feb. 14, 7:30pm (intermediate dance lessons), 8:30pm (beginners dance lessons); \$15 (adv)/\$25 (door) • Tickets available at TIX on the Square 420-1757

HELLING CANADIAN COMMUNITY HALL 10436-118 St (479 2038/420-1757) • Those Dancin' Feet: Edmonton Vocal Minority, with a live performance by Womanspace • Sat, Feb. 14, 7pm (door)/7:30 (performance) • \$15/\$10 (low income) • Tickets available at TIX on the Square 420-1757

LATITUDE 53 10248-106 St (423-5353) • 53 Ways to Leave Your Lover: Music by Matt Masters (Toronto), DJ Beyana, karaoke with Neon, silent art auction • Sat, Feb. 14 (8pm); \$5 (member, adv)/\$7 (non-member, adv)/\$10 (door)

CURLY MARTINI SOUTH 10338-81 Ave • A Valentine's Salsa • Fri, Feb. 13, 9pm (door) • \$5 (adv)/\$8 (door)

SHAW CONFERENCE CENTRE Hall A, 9797 Jasper Ave (492-2116) • Valentines Day Dance: Prescribed by the Valentines Day Dance Club • Sat, Feb. 14 (7:30pm-1am) • \$10 (UACD members)/\$15 (non-members)

musicians wanted

Edmonton 2004 Independent Music Expo is an opportunity to sell & promote your products to over 1,500 music fans. Sat May 15 @ Red's. Reserve table space now. 489-7462 Don Joyce.

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music studios

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This Valentine's Day...

new



Feels Like Home

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Norah Jones feels like home

Norah's latest CD "Feels Like Home" is the much anticipated follow up to 2002's "Come Away With Me".

"I'm glad that people liked the last album. It was where I was at the time, musically. This is where I am now. That's what a recording is for me, like a snapshot. We had so much fun making this record."

also from Norah:



\$14.79
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Come Away With Me

HARRY CONNICK, JR. ONLY YOU

new

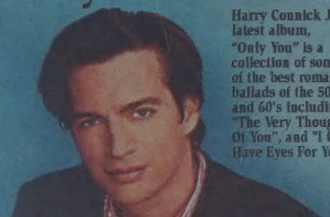


HARRY CONNICK Only You

\$14.99
CD

Harry Connick Jr.

Harry Connick Jr.'s latest album, "Only You" is a collection of some of the best romantic ballads of the 50's and 60's including "The Very Thought Of You", and "I Only Have Eyes For You."



new



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MELISSA ETHERIDGE Lucky

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